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Unrest. —

Higgins = Gleuerne

Lida Lewis Watson.

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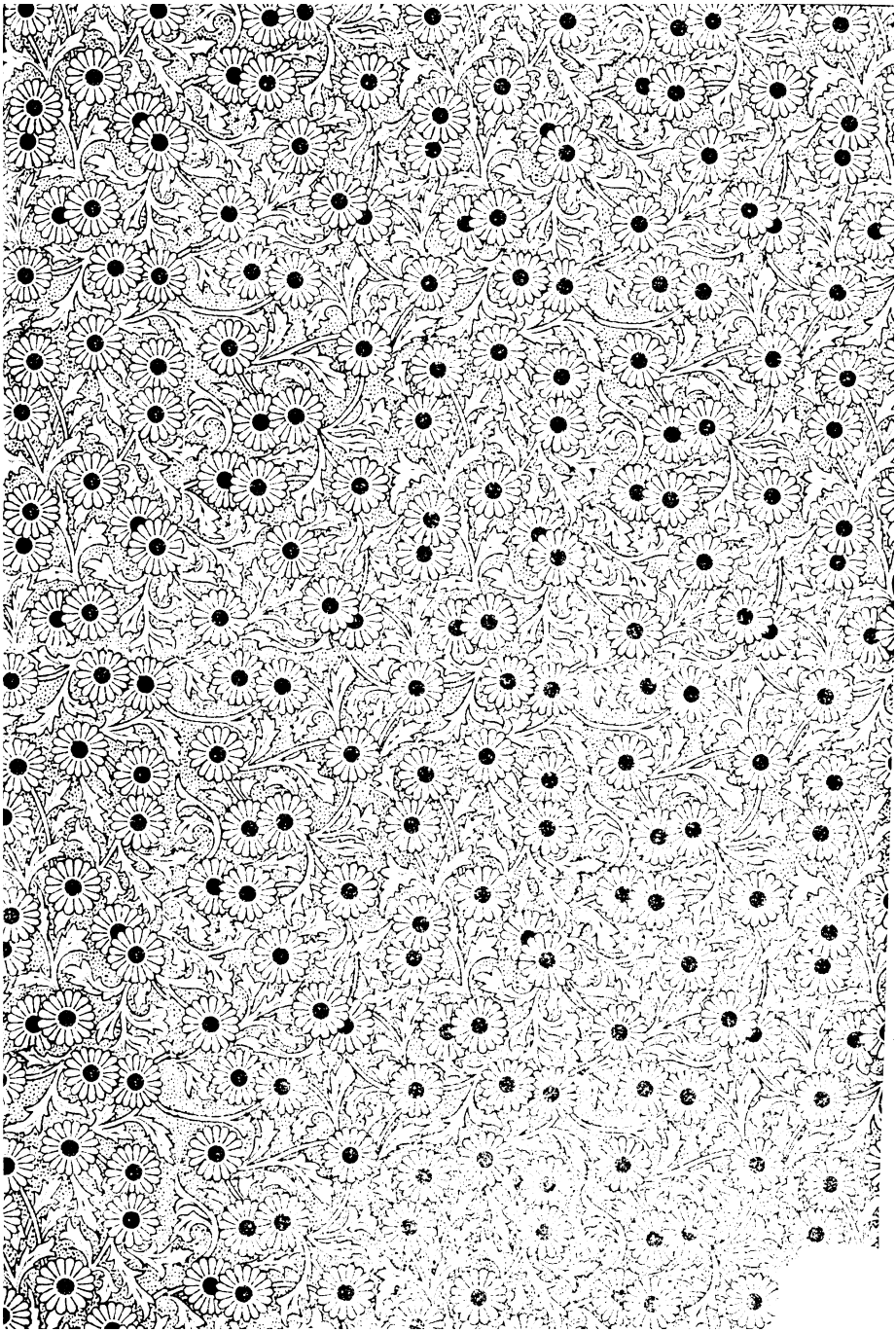

1. Poetry, American.

Unrest.

BY

MME. HIGGINS-GLENERNE.

(LIDA LEWIS WATSON).

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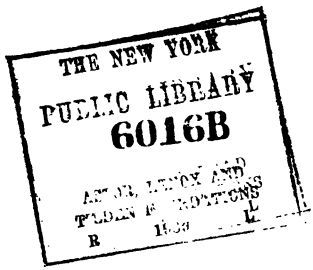

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Dedicated:

IN FILIAL REVERENCE AND AFFECTION,

To my Father, entered into Rest.

To my beloved mother.

*** *** ***

WITH PALMS OF PEACE AND THE PULSE OF PASSION,

To my Husband.

WQR 19FEB'36

Dedication.

"A new star lighting the Lethean stream,
A new song mixed into the song supreme."

The praise or blame of all the world is but the same,—
—The sound, on other lips, of my own name
In loud reproach or gentlest phrase,
Seems so afar to my loath ears; — in distant ways: —
The pulse-beats grow more faint as days go by,
The quick, half-breath of joy is turned to sigh
And sob;— the weight of all the weary years
To be, perchance, seems as each single day's,—
Each passing day doth seem a year! — the ways
That, as a child, were brightened by thy praise,
—The little strength made more by thine encouragement,—
Are as bewildered paths; — and strangely spent
The pow'r of heart t'ward every duty here; —
—The heights thou bade'st me reach seem dim thro' many a tear!
My feet are weary; Father, in dreams again
Those years come back to me; the constant pain
That dwelleth with the day yields place to peace;—
The night is changed to morning, and surcease
Of all things present brings those earlier hours,
When childish hands, close-clasping, held the flowers
Whose thorns thine own had plucked in loving test,—
Thou, apprehending all the heart's unrest
When there should be the thorns without the rose,—
And life's strange, sad surprise bereft of its repose! —
In dreams — and dreams alone; or in the spell
Of mem'ry, when my heart, too tired for lips to tell,

Doth falter, worn with weights too great to bear,—
And sorrows grown too deep for human-speech to share: —

Father, I'm tired with all the efforts made,—
I miss thy hand upon my head in pity laid,—
I miss the shelter of the arms, that, years ago,
Did lift and bear o'er all the paths that wearied so,
The little child whose steps had scarcely grown
Secure enough to trust: Father, alone,
Thro' many a year since then, in these life's after-days
Dark from their bitterness, unlightened by thy praise,
My feet have pressed the paths where but the thorns are
mine,
And, of the journey's end and peace the days still gave
no sign.

. . . . . .

I lift my face to meet thy good-night kiss,—
I lift my hand to touch the face I cannot see: —
Thou art not here! — what mystery is this?
What means this silence that, alone, doth answer me?

Asleep! — O, God! — the hush no sound can break!
Nor tears nor prayers, nor even dumb despair,—
Asleep! — and dreamless! — and no sob of mine can
wake!
Asleep! — yet God hath touched thee lying there,
And woke to Life eternal!
Thy hand upon my head in memory still there lies,—
The benediction of thy voice I hear to-night,—
And I on earth — and thou in paradise,—
And I in darkness,— thou in everlasting Light! —

. . . . . .

Yet not alone ;— the face that, to thy life did bring
The sunshine, e'vn when days were filled with care,—
The heart that unto thine did faithful cling,
And took thy burdens to herself to bear,—
The eyes that looked in thine with tender light,—
—That spoke the earnest faith and trust they had,—
The lips that always sang their sweetest song at night,
And made thee,— if thou would'st or no,— be glad,
The arms that held thee safe in love, thro' all this life,
— Wherein thou sank while passing to that other
And fairer one that lies Beyond,— thy wife —
Heart of thy heart, both here and There,— *my Mother*,—
Whom all the tenderest love and sweetest praise, besides,
Must do ill justice,— her to guide and guard
God spareth yet, and in my life abides ;—
(Shall lips, ungrateful, then, say life is hard?)
Mother, the child that first on thy bosom lay,
Whose kiss soothed into calm her tiny cry —
Did scarcely need thee more than yet she doth to-day,
To hush her heart's unrest to peace, by thy low lullaby.

. . . . . .

To thee with hushed step and trembling hands, I come,—
—Somewhere I know, *he*, too, will understand and care !
And on the lips that smile and yet are cold and dumb
To lips that lay their warmth of kisses there —
As on thine own, is praise, for what the world will chide ;—
For every effort made,— for every fault a prayer,—
And God knows all the fault and sees the heart, beside,—
And so I kneel and lay my gift upon Love's altar there.

Introduction.

She who gave to others in her sweet,
Consummate way, the thoughts were her's,—
And sang, to ears unworthy, songs so mete
For those attuned to be interpreters
Of higher harmonies than those of earth,
—Whose spirit-sense was always cleared beyond the breath
Of this material life,—in this nobler birth
Of apprehended song
From archetypal causes, from a heart a-glow
With woman's innate sense of right and wrong,—
Whose spiritual significance, by us called death,
Hath brought unconscious minds a grief should lay them low,
She, who, in but the little tremor of her wrist
Found all a soul's vehemence,
And, in every common bush, the flame of God,—
Who saw the beauties of the worlds unknown in her soul's glance,
And wonders of the spheres in every pebble by her foot a-trod,
Hath writ no sweeter truth than this, she said:
"—— How sure it is,
That, if we say a true word, instantly
We feel 't is God's, not ours, and pass it on
As bread at sacrament we taste and pass
Nor handle for a moment, as indeed
We dared to set up any claim to such!"
So, with the words our pen hath writ,—our lips have spoke,
That bear, perchance, within them any seed

Beyond the common utterance of men, -
They straightway 'come as sacred as the touch,
To lips unworthy, of the bread were broke; —
And, if they fall far short of such a chance
Whereby were any fruit, from blossom mete,
There yet were ours, (thro' introspective glance,)
The taste of vintage on our lips still clear and sweet;
—The intents loyal, and the quick desires
That shape themselves anew, — the fresher fires
That rise from ashes blown upon by literal breath
Of earnest heart beats, sweeping up from pulse to brain; —
— Of half-accomplished efforts, made thro' pain,
The bringing back from apprehended Death.

"Jasper, First."

TO MY LORD, MY KING, MY HUSBAND.

"——Hopes apace,
Were changed to long despairs, . . . till God's own grace
Could scarcely lift above the world forlorn
My heavy heart. Then thou did'st bid me bring
And let it drop adown thy calmly great Deep being!"

I.

"And jasper, first:" To you, my king,
I come, and, at your feee I kneel, and bring
To you my gift: such gems as make, so we are told,
The glories of that Land more manifold,—
And lay, from street to portal, its foundations, fair,
— Its streets pure gold, — the portals sloping there
One pearl; — its walls of jasper: — jasper first, they say,
Of all that City where is endless Day!
So, gath'ring, one by one, with woman's strength, and hand
A-tremble with such treasure, — understand, —
— For woman's strength is small, but, tho' this be, her heart
Endowed of gracious Heaven, seems, to do her part,—
And, where her feet do falter in the ways
Of rough and daily-passing,—still the praise
Of her soul's wealth, in *being* woman, lies
Upon her lips; — and, in her eyes
The tears of overgladness, as she lifts
And lays, as I do now, her holiest gifts
Upon the Altar where her king
Doth minister: — high-priest of love,
Toward whom the utmost of her being swift doth move
To prove the deep religion of her life, — to bring the sacrifice
of introspective hours,
—To pour, bedewed with her heart's blood, the flowers

Her arms o'erflow, to cast them where the feet
— Of none save him hath pressed : — the sacred aisles
That lead from lintel to the chancel of his smiles ! —
None other entereth in : — and dim and sweet
The light doth fall, — as if the peace of God
Lay quiet where his feet, — her priest's, — have trod.

II.

And such is woman : — And so I —
— I, being woman, find within to lie,
— In soul and heart, the blest desire to give,
— To yield my votive off'ring, and to live
As one who makes her life's religion her one aim ;
And so, my lord, since that and love's the same,
Do know myself full true in soul and heart, —
And something over-willing, then, to live such part
As doth but make me worshipper and subject, too,
Finding my lord, my king, high-priest, my all in *you !*

III.

And, gathering, one by one, the gems were sought,
I lay before you what my heart has brought :
— " And jasper, first." Of heaven the founding-stone :
And, so, of love — for that, alone,
Means suffering : — When Heaven 's won
That *must* be ; — and love and Heaven are one.
— " The second, sapphire : " — that is peace,
And love thro' pain at last finds its surcease,
And so I 've followed, gem by gem ; — the years
That slow have passed have held no lack of tears,

— Tho' secret, since that man
Would not of woman's tears, since time began,
With patience ; — and, so, by happy ways,
Methought, my life would gain your gracious praise ! —
Chalcedony, third : and thus throughout the list,
'Till, sweet reflection of them all, there shines the amethyst ! —
God's bow of promise is not more, —
Nor, yet, in woman's soul, her treasured store
Doth fain surpass this one : — Her promise, sweet,
— Her utmost faith, — her truth ! — Here, at your feet,
I lay my jewels down : — your crown's fair gems, —
And, from the flowers, your feet to press, the stems
I 've thornless made, — See ! my hands bleed ! —
But, in your face, my lord, I find my meed
If you but smile ! — for pain is best
To woman when there follows rest,
— Such rest as comes from love fulfilled, —
— Such peace as comes when all the pain is stilled !
— Yes, my hands bleed, — but women count their hours
By blood-drops from their pulses spilled on flow'rs
They pluck the thorns from, — that they lay
With tender hands beneath the feet of men they love, — the way
Of such was always so ; — 'tis sweeter so to prove ; —
I think that Christ, Himself, taught women how to love ! —

IV.

And what I am is yours ! — and what I *was*,
Before mine eyes had rested on your face,
I have no mem'ry of, because
My soul knew neither time nor space ; —

For, what the world was e'er God bade the sun
To shine on chaos, seems my past, before that love begun
To cast its glory o'er me ! — O, my king,
My future lies without myself ! There is no thing
The wide earth holds for which 't were worth to live
Save this : Your love to take, and mine to give !
Do with me as you will, — I have no choice
But this : To be forever where your voice
May fall upon mine ears ; —
And where the light that 's on your face, thro' all life's years
May rest upon my own,
— I at your feet, and you upon your throne, —
Your throne my heart. . . . . Reach forth your
hands, —
The hour is late ! The swaying censer throbs its breath
Of spicéd sweetness on the dusky air : —
— ' Tis morning now in other lands, somewhere !
Somewhere ! Ah, me ! *There* is no thought of death !
— Reach forth your hands and lay them on my hair ! —
Eternal morning ! and, no need for prayer !
I would to God to-night that we were there !

Serenade.

I.

See, as the shadows deep
  Tenderly fall,
Hark! to his mate asleep,
  The nightingale call!

II.

Sweet as the bee that sips,
  Light as the swallow dips,
Taste I as wine thy lips,
  — Rarer than all.

III.

Now from my troubled breast
  Banish alarms, —
Low let me sink to rest
  Love, in thine arms!

Death.

A SONNET.

When some Belovéd, unto us most dear,
Most sweet and kind, of all the world most true,
Be taken from us, and we wander here
So full of grief we know not what to do,—
When sound of other voices fails to wake
The old, rare bliss of days that have gone by,
When each and every chord doth seem to break
In low and cadenced pleading, — like a sigh, —
When that the songs are hushed that used to sing,
And life is like some bird with broken wing,—
Then most like holding flowers that overflow
The tender hands, that plucked and loved them so,
With dying fragrance, is the breath
Of that rare presence passing life to death.

Failure.

There are seeds that were blossoms of beauty,
That I hold in my hands here to-night,
And I stand in the pathway of duty
With my face upward-turned to the light
Of God's stars, and I think of the treasure
I hold,— that will be in exquisite measure,
— When, lo! 'midst earth's shadows of wo,
Half the seeds are blown far and are scattered
By the light winds that over them go,—
Shall I say, sometime, that it mattered
That the seeds I intended to sow,
Drifted out from my impotent keeping
Into far better soil at the last,
Than I, in my heavy heart-sleeping,
In my weakness could ever have cast?—
When sometime, in some fairer morning,
On the other side of the sea,
I shall stand with my face t'ward the dawning
Of the day of Eternity,
And look t'ward the land overflowing,—
In richest abundance replete,
Shall look on the flowers there growing
So near the Redeemer's dear feet,
Will it be with a wistful regretting —
With the hot tears obscuring my sight?

Looking back on the weakness besetting
My heart, as I stand here to-night?
Or shall I know the fair flowers supernal,—
Know them as mine, and then rest,
When He lifts them in beauty eternal,
And lays them, in love, on His breast?

The Cloud with the Silver Lining.

Last night, as the sunset faded
Out of the skies in the west,
I sat by the firelight, thinking
The thoughts that I love the best,
And weaving a bit of a fancy
Into a bit of a rhyme,
Founded upon a story
That I'd read somewhere, some time:

How once a little maiden
Made a quest for the strangest thing,
A good deal like the hunting
For the hiding-place of spring,
Or a search in the throats of the robins
For the first sweet notes they sing!

The story, as I remember,
Told of a rainy day,
And the maiden growing tired
And restless at her play,—
Told how, at the close of the daylight,
She wandered out and away,
Away 'twixt the drops of water
Coming out of the low'ring sky.
"I think I can go and not get wet;
But anyhow, I 'll try!"

"But where are you going, darling?"
They asked; and she answered low:
"Over the hills to find the cloud
That is silver-lined, you know!"
Over the hills and through the woods,
And across the rivulet's bed,
And over the meadows, where, in spring,
The violet lifts its head,
And on t'ward the dawn where the morning lark
Is singing his praise to the newborn day,
And up where the sky bends down to the hills
At the coming of eve, alway.

But ever afar the clouds lay low,
As far as could see the human eye;
And at last of a traveler, bent and old,
The maiden asked with a sigh:
"Can you tell me the way to the silver-lined cloud,
And what pathway leadeth by?
Do you think that I could reach it to-night
If ever so hard I should try?
I have asked the trees and the flowers and grass,
And the birds and the running stream,
And they all said 'Yes, they had seen it pass
But 't was only seen in a dream.'"

"Your journey lies my way, my dear,
And your feet are weary and sore:
If you 'll lay your head on my shoulder here,
You need not walk any more!

And I 'll carry you safe to the home that lies
Just across on the opposite shore:
To the shore that lies beyond the sea
Whose waters glitter and glisten,
Where the music is sweet as music can be —
You can scarce hear it now, if you listen;
But just over there where the sea touches shore,
And the radiant sun is shining,
Where the light begins and the dark is o'er,
Lies the cloud with the silver lining!"

So he lifted her up, and lay her head
So close to his own so hoary.
"*I'm Father Time!*" he softly said,
"And yours is life's olden story."
So she lay in peace and watched the gleam
Of the sails out on the ocean,
Till her eyes closed fast, and so, to dream,
She was cradled to sleep by the motion.
So she slept; and she dreamed that the boat touched shore, —
And she thought of the silver lining, —
At the sound she awoke—the morning had broke,
And the golden sun was shining.

And so 't was a dream, and she only a child,
I thought as I sat in the firelight there —
A child whose life was undefiled,
And whose heart unacquainted with care.

But between the lines of the childish tale
  Runs the story of every day:
Of restless hearts, and hopes that fail,
  And at last *the going away*,
Asleep, like the child worn out with life's quest;
  And, too, like the child, resigning,
O'er the ocean of time we drift and rest,—
  And awake on the Shore
Where the ocean's breast
  Meets the cloud with the silver lining.

If ——.

If we had known before the flowers perished,
And chill and cold the darkness came at last,
Before was gone the warmth our souls had cherished,
And light and fragrance mingled with the past;
If had been proved what sweetness of thanksgiving
Could burst from solitary harps that still have lain,
Before had passed the glory of our living,
And rarest bliss had given place to pain—

If, through the silence of these weary hushes,
The thought of past time music had not come,
And to our lips had memory sent no sudden flushes
To mark the old-time kisses of the lips now dumb,—

If this had been — and, to our restless spirits,
The past had granted not some blesséd days—
If all things sweetest that our life inherits
Had passed without the limits of our common ways—
I wonder if our hearts could still sing of God's glory—
While with our tears the sweet, sad sight were dim—
Or if, recounting all the olden story,
Our human lips were mute in praise of Him?

. . . . . .

What matters it, since not one note of sweetness
But answers 'neath the touch of God's own hand?

Since that, that seems a lack of life-completeness,
Is but our heritage within this Better Land?
— Albe the earth-time noises hush the sweeter strain
Of harp and lute that all too silent lay —
Albe that to our longing sight comes not again
The fairer light that's hid in sudden day!

. . . . . .

But yet our lips are so athirst for life's rare wine! —
And yet our hearts so long for earth-time music grown divine! —
And still from hushéd harps God gives no sign!

I heard Sweet Sounds.

I heard sweet sounds, and lo! thy voice was brought
Unto my soul on the white wings of thought;—
The voice that mem'ry's sweet, sad self hath sought.

A tiny flower breathed upward from its dewy bed,
And to my hungry heart my soul hath said:
"It is his voice that breathed in days that dawned and fled."

I dreamed a dream: that I, in Paradise,
Awakened to a glad and sweet surprise,
When that my soul found grace within thine eyes.

And, back to-day the breaths of violets blow,
—Warm with the sweet south wind of long ago,—
The sweetness of the days I used to know.

In Memoriam.

REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER.

[As published in New York World.]

With pulseless hands enfolded on the silent breast,
He lies asleep in sweet, eternal rest:

No more for him the count of earthly days to be,
Who now has fathomed God's divinest mystery.

Love dareth not to even question why,
But feels how sad a thing it was for him to die,—

For whom Love's pallid lips make constant moan,—
Grief's sweeter self, that, silent, sits alone

With her own great and solitary woe
That only God can understand and know;—

For those he loved, long nights and weary days:
For him, glad pæans of immortal praise,

And sudden brightness of life's morrow blend
In sweet, eternal calm that knows no end.

For those he loved, no praise of worthy deeds
Can fill the weary lack of sacred needs.

For him, availeth not the mete of praise or blame,
Since that he listened and heard God call his name!

Beneath the fainting forms of those who wait
This side the fair and heavenly Gate,

Still lies the strong protection of his creed,
And th' Everlasting Arms in hours of helpless need.

Incompleteness.

One soul against the flesh of all mankind.

I.

I dream of the strains of a soft-tuned lyre
In a wordless song of sweetness
That fills my heart with its passion fire,
And my soul with incompleteness; —
I listen in vain for a word of the lay,
As each throb of the music closes,—
But the sweet, deep meaning is hid away,—
As the fragrance concealed in the rose is!

II.

I dream of the song of a twilight bird,—
And its melody, richer and rarer
Than aught in the world thro' life I've heard,
And the songster than morning is fairer: —
But I think how the sunset's tint and glow, —
And the tiny bird that 's nested
Within my bosom's drifted snow,
Bring no more of peace than the rest did!

III.

And I know that in vain, of bird and lute,
The far, sweet echo lingers, —
Of the bird's song hushed, and the lyre mute,—
Uncaressed by Love's dear fingers,—
And I ponder life's wonderful, wordless lay, —
And still long for the blissful sweetness
That I know is hidden far away
Somewhere in God's completeness!

Jerusalem the Golden.

"And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there."

I.

We stand outside of the gates — the gates of the city of God —
And long for a glimpse of its streets — the streets which no mortal hath trod.
Some glory falls over our path, as much as He deemeth is best;
Its foundations o'ershadow our ways, as the shade of a marvellous rest.
Yes, outside of the walls and the gates, whereby there entereth in
Only whom He hath called by name — only whom He hath cleansed from sin;
We wait in the place of His presence, so near to the foot of the throne,
And are filled with the blest contemplation of wonders and glories unknown!

II.

O, Jerusalem! beautiful city! what stones of fair colors are thine!
I would the sweet signification of all thy foundation were mine!
Thy name o'er the tide of the human wings its way as of old did the dove —
With its message of heavenly mercy, of safety, of wonderful love;
Thou liest in beauty so tranquil — so fair in unspeakable grace,
That souls, in beholding, have slumbered to wake to the light of His face!

We wait outside of the gates — the gates of the city of God !
And look back o'er the ways of life's journey — the ways that we, weary, have trod —
Till we've paused when the sound of far waters with jubilant music was rife,
And dreamed 't was the flow of the river — the River of Water of Life !

. . . . . .

III.

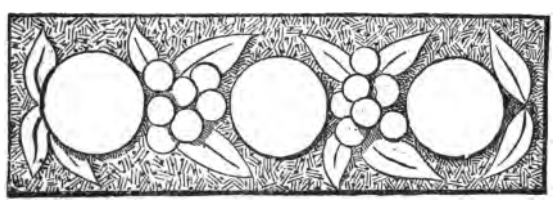
A twilight of rest at the noontide, a mingling of darkness and light,
A sound as of whispering breezes in trees that are just out of sight;
And we know 'neath His wings is a shadow, a shade from the wearisome heat,
That the trees for the healing of nations are dropping their fruits at the feet
Of those who will gather them freely — the fruits that are golden and fair —
That river, and refuge, and twilight, all, even the healing, are there;
A twilight that meaneth not nightfall — a glory that meaneth the Lamb !
O, Jerusalem ! fairest of cities, that showeth me just what I am !

. . . . . .

IV.

We wait outside of thy gates, and long for a glimpse of thy streets,
For the portals whereby we may enter, and, ent'ring, find rest at His feet;

To breathe out our souls from the mortal, and know that 't were
praising Him so—
To touch but the hem of the garment that cleanseth us whiter
than snow!
We wait outside of thy walls, Jerusalem, city of God,
And long for a glimpse of thy streets — the streets which no
mortal hath trod;
Thy glory falls over our path, as much as He deemeth is best;
Thy foundations o'ershadow our ways, as the shade of a marvellous
rest!



If We Could Know!

I.

Do souls grow weary with their longing over there,
In that fair Land departing spirits seek?
Do wistful eyes close in the raptured prayer
For that which wistful hearts bespeak?
And shall we there behold the sweet fulfilling
Of cherished dreams we love to dream below?
I sometimes think, if God were only willing,
How sweet would be the knowledge, — could we know!

II.

Is it vain-dreaming that the snowy buds of earth,
On which hath smiled its sunlight incomplete,
— In the sunshine of His face shall have new birth,
And open radiant blossoms at His feet?
Will human love, that could not know completeness,
In bonds of human-forming here below,
Be ours in all the dear and olden sweetness
That oft our hearts have been a-thirst to know?

III.

If we could know of the waking over There,
— The ending of our conflict here,—
That all were to be ours, — the burden of each prayer, —
— All our hungered souls have deemed most dear!

. . . . . .

But beyond the flowing of the River
The mountain-tops are bright with richer glow, —
— No need of shade to hide the pain and quiver
We vainly strive to bury here below ! —
And we shall leave all baneful weight of unbelief
To wander by the streams that crystal flow
Among the meadows, fresh with bud and leaf,
— More beautiful than earth can know, —
Shall linger at His feet, — and near Him dwell,
— Beholding all the glories of that promised land,
And look, in peace, o'er all that He deemed best,
And know what now we could not understand.

Jealous!

I.

To see the sunlight fall upon his head,
And leave its smiles and kisses nested there—
To feel the earth astir beneath his tread,
To know his step has even rested there;—

II.

To know the shadowed Night enfolds him, hour by hour,
And lays her touch upon him—head and heart—
And holds him, in her sweet voluptuous power,
From brow to feet, from all the world apart;

III.

To know that all the sweet, warm flesh is hers,
And that he lies and dreams beneath her kiss,—
That all the dusky hours are her interpreters,
And that *I* am shut out from all such bliss!

IV.

To know he sleeps within her bosom clasped tight,
So close she feels his heart-throbs on her own,
—To lie awake and think of such things out of sight
And to the world give neither sigh nor moan!

V.

To see him bear one pain I may not share,
To know his feet are weary—and his heart,—
To know that I am here while he is there,
That I, of trouble, may not bear his part!

VI.

To see men meet and clasp him,— hand in hand,
And speak his name while looking on his face,—
I wonder if all this his soul can understand,
And come and dwell one hour in my place!

VII.

Ah, God! it is not thought of other women makes my pain,—
No face nor form can lure his heart from mine;
My loss, I know, is not some other woman's gain,
For just as Love is, so is Faith, divine!

VIII.

It cannot bow itself to things less great,
Less noble, or less pure than its own self must be;
It cannot fall below divinity's estate,
Since Love is born of God, Himself; ah, me,

IX.

If I could take his soul to-night,
And compass all the end and the beginning,
Unclasp his hands of Life's fair fruits held tight—
The palms just out of reach for winning,

X.

Could change the speech for silence grown more sweet,
And rest, for unrest, found and given,
And journey toward that life complete,
We know so little of— that men call heaven.

XI.

Where fruits, they say, turn not to ashes, in the gloom,
  Where rapture comes not first, and grieving after, —
Where love finds not his only rival at a tomb,
  Where crying mingles not with laughter.

XII.

I only know, if this could be to-night
  My privilege — all human faults confessing —
And, with him, I should stand within God's sight,
  And he himself should ask of me my blessing,

XIII.

I could not give, from out the arms that cling
  About the man that death itself must spare,
To even Him, the one and only thing,
  That could make heaven for me up there !

The Passing of Summer.

"—— Thy music dropt here unaware."
"—— the sighless, songless lips, the wail and music wedding."

I.

The sun has passed its mid-day height and heat,
And shadows slowly move across the waving grass,
And bend the stately heads of wheat
Beneath the lazy lang'rous winds that pass
In whispers: phantoms of themselves, like some spent song
That has gone by, or, like the mem'ry of a dream,
That after waking still abides the whole day long,
And makes reality of things that in our sleep did seem.

And nature is but half awake—
Whether in soft, voluptuous mood, or in the entrancéd state
That lies a tithe within the mysteries that break
Upon th' eternal sight, or in that drowsy sweetness of estate
That comes within the realm of dreams—who knows?

II.

I lay upon thy lips my kisses, sweet with vain regret,
Oh summer! in whose dying eyes
I read my own impatient quest, and in whose hands there lies
The flow'rs thou'st gathered, sweet and limp and wet
With dews that fell in softer eves than e'er will fall again;
Beneath thy feet the scarlet poppies burn and set
Thee roundabout with drowsy warmth: the pain

Of all the insufficient gladness in thine heart astir,
To sooth and lull to lethargy —
Some wealth of giving in thy soul there were
Such wealth of having 'bideth still with thee.

. . . . .

Above her brow the golden bars
Of last and ling'ring sunset gleams,
In tear-mist eyes, like rain-washed stars,
Burn th' unquenched fires of dreams.
The low winds move across her breast
And lull to sweet repose,
Between its drifts, half viewed, half guessed,
The last remaining rose.

Her arms are filled with treasured sweets
Of blossoms softly clinging,
And half-way down the gath'ring gloom
Throbs the thrush she set a-singing.

. . . . .

I turn my face against the ashen grayness of the fires gone out;
I close my ears to that low mandolin
That drops its golden fulness round about my life without—within;
Who would not, weary, fain asleep to fall
With arms o'er full of blossoms, rich and sweet?
And have, through ears but half-remembering, the thrush's call,
And scarlet poppies burning at their feet?
With luxurous tenderness of years, that lies,
Lived o'er and over, and the burdened strain
Of over-happy music mirrored in the eyes
Misty with the tears of bliss that's pain?

. . . . . .

The fire-flies flash their lamps across the dark,—
The odorous night her censer swings and dips;—
Methought I heard the voice of Summer then — hush — hark!

. . . . . .

I see her face, and kiss the last sweet sigh from off her lips!

Nil Sine Amore.

TO MY HUSBAND.

There is not time to love thee all I would!
The dawn of morning sinks into the crimson sea
Of sunset at the infanthood
Of all my love. The sweet dusk shades
Of sweeter night are caught up on the wings of light,
And borne into the deep'ning space of time,
As, o'er the sunlit seas of thine own southern clime
The odor of its roses bear its soft winds far,
So do the moments, rich in rapture, bear their bliss
In burden sweeter than all thought of worlds like this —
The grandeur of thy loving, the glory of thy kiss —
And so, forsooth, life's day is all too brief to love thee, sweet,
(Thou mine, from uncrowned brow to perfect feet!)

. . . . . .

I dreamed of bliss, and I am blinded by the light,
As they who dream in darkness, face to face with sight
Are blind with rapture, as before they were with night.
But from my dream I cannot wake to love thee as I would:
The dawn of morning sinks into the crimson sea
Of summer sunset at the infanthood
Of my desire. The dusk shades, fleet,
Are caught up on the wings of light,
And, lo! the day dawns, all too brief to love thee, sweet!
Too brief the night.

Teach Me!

[Dedicated to JOHN G. WHITTIER.]

I.

Teach me the way, from out the vain endeavor,
To lull to rest the heart's so loud acclaim,
Teach thou my heart the bravest way to sever
Its life from all too much deservéd blame!
Teach me what follows Passion's all-perpetual fire,—
Of th' eventide that ends its heated day,
The restlessness of mood and life's unquenched desire
That makes much part of life's long, tragic play!

II.

Teach me, when hope is gone, to strengthen Faith's believing,—
When harps are broke, to mend the broken string,
To find life's richest fruit beneath the world's deceiving,
Its fig tree less accurst when done with blossoming!

III.

Show me how master strains may float 'neath hands that falter
O'er viols worn with songs snatched forth in haste,—
Show me how thou discordant notes would alter
In this life's melody that idly runs to waste!
Teach me to take upon my lips the swearing
Of the vows of human nature's all important trust,
Teach me the nobler part of burden-bearing,
Whose hardest lesson is the learning life's stern "Must!"

IV.

Teach me these things, thou stronger, nobler-hearted,
Upon whose loftier knowledge rests my own impatient quest,
Let thou thy wisdom, gentle, love-imparted,
Deal with my doubt-perplexéd soul as seemeth best,
That I, upon the threshold of that Life, transfigured, fairer
Than this, wherein my poorer judgment erred,
May but become a worthy standard-bearer
Of Faith's perfected creed, to which thy life has ministered.

Human Wisdom.

"I will go pray our God to-day
To teach thee how to scan
His work divine for human use
Since earth on axle ran!"

I.

"If I were ye," she said, and gave
Her wisdom to the wind and wave,
— The flow'r, the butterfly, the bee, —
— The bird with golden-throated melody, —
"I would not waste my time on those!" —
— And leaned her face where blushed the crimson rose,
And yielded up its heavy odour, sweet,
And sent its hearted petals drifting to her feet, —
And thou, when summer's done, sweet warbler, comes the snow,
And winds, more cruel than the south-winds blow, —
Somewhere, — where drifting coldness never lies
In icy sheets beneath the frowning skies,
In fairer lands thou, surely, must belong!
— In summer-lands would be more sweet thy song,
O, tiny, tender bird of Northern clime,
With song more full of faith than poet's rhyme!

II.

And, banded bee, with velvet coat a-dust
With golden treasure, — labor-given trust, —
Were I but as thou art, to nestle in the rose,
Methinks I would not scorn, for work, such sweet repose!

"Were I but ye!" she said in human pride,—
Its weakness showing forth in wisdom unapplied,—
Most human, thou, while seeming yet so strong,
Most human! Singing of the right, while blind to wrong,
Sweet, tho' mistaken singer, playing out
Life's short, fair summer in delay and doubt,
With God's great mercy compassing about
The imperfections of thy little day,
And shedding light upon thy stumbling way!—

III.

Coulds't thou but learn thy lesson from the bee that dips,
And gather but life's sweetness, and thy lips
Give back again the world its missing due,
—As God intended every soul to do,—
—Thro' individual lives thine own doth hover o'er,
And, from the rose that blossoms at thy door,
—To give as she,—The balm of fragrance shed,
As she her leaves, where human footsteps tread!

IV.

Sing thou thy song for hearts less blest to hear
And catch up, when the nights are long and drear,—
Let wheresoe'er thou art thy summer be,—
—Its sunshine golden, and its zephyrs free;—
Look thou within, and learn, O restless heart,
What God through nature teaches: Do thy part,
And do it faithfully,—with heartsome song,
—And dream thou not it doth to thee belong
To chide the sun to shine, because *thy* day seems dark!
Nor, fain, with human wisdom, hush the lark!

— Its morning comes but once in all life's fitful day, —
And when 't is done, and pale lips pray,
And eyes grown dim with disappointments' tears,
— When looking back o'er life's completed years
With sad regret because of heartfelt pain,
Since life hath lacked the harvest-gain
Of much that might have been, left half-undone,
And, things accomplished 'neath the natural sun
That better were not so, — what then
— Fair dreamer of the sons of men?
From some far vale that bore thy song erstwhile
Wer't not full sweet to list with grateful smile
To echoes of thy music drifting back —
The fragrance of some blossoms in the lack
Of barren years, — thou once did plant and tend:
The ministration to one needing friend,
This is the whole of human life, be sure:
— A helping hand, — a song, — a heart that 's pure!

I Cannot Tell.

I may not know the fragrance of
The flowers whose bloom I see,
It is not mine to sweetly prove
Life's blissful melody,
And yet, the flowers purely fair,
God gives to some to hold,
And some of the music heard up There,
This side the Gates of Gold

Fills raptured hearts with ecstasy
Too deep to be expressed!
But let that be as e'er it may,
I know that God knows best.
Perhaps the flowers would droop and die
If in my hands they lay,
And, hearing such sweet sounds, might I
Almost forget to pray!

It might be so — I cannot tell —
The gifts I long to cherish,
— Because that I should love too well
And clasp too close — would perish!
My heart might burst with throbs of praise
For that sweet glimpse of heaven
That falls across some women's ways
That His great love hath given.
And still I know He understands
My need of sacred good,
Who holds and keeps in heavenly lands
My crown of womanhood.

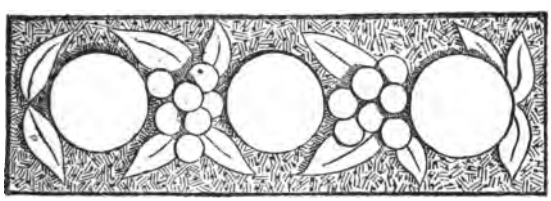
Homesick.

I am tired to-night, so tired,
And you are far away,
And I want you more, if it can be,
Than I have all through the day.
Somehow, when the sun is shining,
And the matin birds sing sweet,
Though I long for the sound of your
voice, Sweetheart,
And the coming of your feet,
It is n't so hard to bear, dear,
For I wake in the sweet, glad light,
And say to my restless heart, "take cheer;
He is coming home to-night!"

And I watch, and wait, and listen
With a feeling in my breast
That will not be stilled at the nightfall,
When I want you, dear, and rest!
When the daylight softly passes,
And the mist comes up from the sea,
And the tide comes slowly drifting in,
But it brings no sail to me.

I am tired, and I want your kisses,
And your arms to fold me tight,
For a strangely homesick feeling
Comes over me to-night!

And I'd give my life to lie in your arms,
As ofttimes I have lain,
And drink from your lips, in one long draught,
The peace to outweigh this pain!
But the tide comes drifting in to-night,
And the mists come up from the sea,
And the skies are dark where the sun went down,
And no ship comes in for me!



God's and Ours!

Ours yestere'en, and God's to-night,
She needeth not our pity —
The little child who walks in light
Of the Celestial City,
So softly did the Lord unclose
The crystal gleaming Portal,
We knew not when her spirit rose
To rest in Realms immortal;
I marvel how the birds can sing
Their low, soft vesper-praises,
When sweet the voice that used to ring
Is hushed beneath the daisies!
With folded hands across the breast —
Her wee hands made for kisses —
She lieth in that dreamless rest
That human sleeping misses;
Not hers, but ours, the dark of earth
At eve she closed her eyes on —
To waken at her angel-birth
Beyond the Heaven's horizon.
For us the silence in the room
Broke but by earthsome noises,
For her the light beyond the gloom,
And sound of choral voices!

What gracious knowledge now is hers,
  Beyond our highest knowing,
Who waits where soft God's breathing stirs
  The palms of heavenly growing?
We lean t'ward Gates left half-ajar
  To list the mystic singing,
And see, beyond a single star,
  The asphodels up-springing.
His light sets all the tree a-glow
  — Whose leaves have perfect healing —
Beside the River's gentle flow,
  And, 'cross our spirits stealing
A knowledge that within the breast
  God sends in such affliction,
Falls softly as the needed rest
  Of His silent benediction.
And so we drift beyond the bounds
  Of earthly sorrow sent us,
Hushed soft to sleep with sweeter sounds
  Of heavenly music lent us.

Divine Jure.

"Spun fine as fire and jewelled thick with tears."

I.

. . . . And you ask why I've need of your lips, dear,
— Your lips that are rarer than wine?
And why I have need for your heart here
To place over the throbbing of mine?
And why I need all of your life, dear? —
Has my womanhood given no sign
Why my restlessness seeks the calm grandeur
That dwells on your manhood's high plains?
Why my spirit finds peace in the wisdom
And strength that your honor retains?

II.

I list in my heart for God's whisper,
And hear but the sound of your voice,
Yet weep when the mercy of Heaven
Sends my heart out of all things its choice!
— My choice out of time and Forever,
Out of life, and death's infinite space:
Just to lie in your arms and yes, ever
And ever to look on your face!

III.

I mount up the heights of your being
With footsteps unshod of the earth,—
I lift up my brow with its chrism
Of the light of love's wonderful birth,
And my lashes are wet with a sadness
That is not—not wholly—a pain,—
My sight dimmed with the mist of sweet gladness
For womanhood's holiest gain!

Chiaro' Scuro.

"——for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."—*Cor.*

I.

Who knows what there is in a second of time
  Swept into the wonder of space,
That cannot be caught in the measure of rhyme,
  And in thought is scarce given a place?
The least little snatch, perhaps, of a song,
  And voiced in a careless fashion,
A dash of color, an odor sweet,
  And there has burst into passion

II.

The whole of the soul, as from embers the flame,
  At a breath that is blown upon it,—
—I suppose that each heart God has made is
      the same,—
  At sometime just such things have won it!
O roses of flame, and lilies of white—
  The breath of your sweets on my brain,—
—And out of the being of darkness to-night,
  And the realm of all possible pain,—

III.

I drift, and am lost in the waves of delight
  That on my restlessness break,
And dream with eternity almost in sight,—
  Where the tempest-tossed soul shall awake,—

—Where the fever of earth in the waters of Lethe
Shall be cooled,— and the blood be at rest
In the pulse of the human,— the passions that seethe
'Neath the lilies of peace on the breast!

IV.

Is it something God told us in Heavenly lands,
Told our souls as He breathed in His breath?
Is it something we 've lost since we came from
His hands,
That will dawn on us there, after death,
That the soul, half forgetting, keeps striving in vain
To remember,— that trust that He gave,
That almost drifts back to us, sometimes, again,
—That our hearts are too helpless to save?

V.

That He writes, as a message in hearts of the flow'rs,—
On the leaves of the lily and rose,
And, in infinite patience with these hearts of ours,
Sends it down to us, *do* you suppose?
Will He pity and pardon, because we forgot
On the field of the battle of life,
We, footsore and weary, with hearts that are hot
In the fev'rish and turbulent strife,—

VI.

Where the shot and the shell gives no chance for a prayer,
And ten thousand are felled in defeat,
To ten, who unharmed, may their colors still bear,—
To whom victory comes and is sweet?

Will forgiveness be his who falls dead on the field
But whose breast bears the wound and the scars,
Will God lift him up, with his sword and his shield,
And his blood, and his spurs, *and his stars?*

VII.

When the seal of his death is stamped red on his brow,
And for whom all the battle is done,
Will God then remember, in pity, just how
The victory he fain *would* have won?
When the message He wrote on that rose on his breast,
That covers the tell-tale wound,
Comes back to him now, in that infinite rest
That's unbroke in its stillness by sound,—

VIII.

To him — when the bugle in battle shall cease,
And the Heavenly choirs have burst
On his heart that so vainly has hungered for peace,
Will come back what God told him at first!

. . . . . .

O, beautiful themes of wonderful lands,
That the heart in its dreaming has wrought!
O, songs without words, that the soul understands,
That our hearts in their longing have sought,

IX.

And sung in the night, when the light in the East,
That we 've watched for with tear-laden eyes,—
As the prayer on our lips in despairing had ceased,
Broke in morning from darkest of skies!

Ye shall come to us there, in the city of God,
In a beauty undreamed of on earth,
There shall be for the soul as its answer to prayer,
The dawn of a marvelous birth,

X.

And the silence, by speech that has never been broke,
As we 've drifted toward infinite days,
In the sweetest of language that lips ever spoke,
Shall resolve into anthem of praise!
And from hunger of heart, and the feverish thirst,
And the craving for infinite peace,
And the battle of life where defeat is accurst,
The human shall have its release!

Toi Que J'aime!

Die roses,— fade lights,— and the world is fading, too,
And I would that I might die, as well, for the sake of a man like you!
But, oh! to be as I am to-night, with the passion in my breast
That drives me mad with its curséd power and the might of its strange unrest!
To feel, in the breath of the dusk-red rose, your quick, warm breath on my cheek,
And to read in its heart with its sensuous blush the passion you could not speak!
I bury my face in the heart of it as I'd bury it on your breast,
If you'd only come back and let me lie in your arms to-night and rest!

In your warm, strong arms with their maddening clasp,— and your throbbing heart on mine,
And, oh! to drink with my burning mouth, your lips' delirious wine!
To feel, in the heat of my feverish pain, on my bosom your passionate kiss,
I gladly would barter eternity's gain for an hour of such exquisite bliss!
For just one hour,— a *lifetime* here,— there *couldn't* be any death,
There never could be any parting, Dear, while you breathed thro' my lips your breath!

I could not die tho' the gates swung wide that ope'd t'ward the City of Light,—
Tho' the angels of God should beckon to me, an' I lay in your arms to-night!
I buried my face in the dusky rose, but that could not cool its heat,
The lights burn low, the rose is dead, and lies here at my feet:
I killed it with the burning flame that flashed from my heart to my cheek,—
I think that I could kill you the same with the passion I dare not speak!
I buried my face in the heart of it as I'd bury it on your breast,—
If you'd only come back and let me lie in your arms to-night and rest!
In your strong, warm arms with their maddening clasp, and your throbbing heart on mine,
And drink,—ah, me! with my burning mouth, your lips' delirious wine!

"In the Silence of the Farther Shore is Rest."

"All success
Proves partial failure; all advance implies
What's left behind; all triumph, something crushed
At the chariot wheels."

"We lose sight of the sun
In the dust of the racing chariots."

I.

One day at a time; — it is not so long, —
Be it grief with a chant, or love with a song;
Be it smiling or weeping, we surely know
That as yesterday went, to-day will go; —
As the day went down, ere the stars came out,
So to-morrow, with all of its burden of doubt,
Its measure of cares, and its worry and fret,
Will go out with the tide, and the sun at its set.

II.

And the gladness, that came to the heart as its guest,
And the aching, that lay like a stone on the breast,
The hopes and the fears, and the smiles and the sighs, —
And the glory of dawning that crimsoned the skies
When the vigil of watching was dimming the sight, —
Will all have gone out with the coming of night.
And the pulsing of passion in wars that were rife, —
And the bliss that has followed the bitter of life, —
And the scarlet of carnage, that staineth the soul,
And the feet that have failed in the race for the goal, —

With the heart that has faltered, in Time's telling test,
And the soul that has lived for the sins it's confessed, —
Lo! all things that be, both of wrong and of right,
Drift out with Time's tides, 'neath the pall of its night.

. . . . . .

III.

One day at a time; not one effort is lost, —
For each duty that's offered God counteth the cost,
Yet not as we count it; the loss 'gainst the gain!
For, each disappointment, failure and pain, —
The failures, no matter how many they are,
That we mark with a cross, God sets with a star.

IV.

And the pulse of earth's passion, in wars that are rife, —
The bliss that doth follow the bitter of life, —
The scarlet of carnage that staineth the soul,
And the feet that have faltered in gaining the goal, —
All these that have been, in Time's telling test,
With the sinking of night in eternity rest.

. . . . . .

V.

Life's day and its close; it is not very long, —
Be it grief with a chant, or love with a song;
And the gladness that comes to the heart, as its guest,
And the aching, that lies like a stone on the breast,
The hopes and the fears, — the smiles and the sighs, —
With our eyes toward the east, for the light in its skies,
In the vigil that was, — shall end with the dawning,
And the dark shall drift out in the light of His Morning!

Life's Missing Note.

"Dark sin! White innocence! Endurance dread!
Be still, within your shrouds, my buried dead—"

I.

I could not make her understand how one false note would break
The grander harmony of tones a single touch could wake,
There in the shadowed twilight marking gradual daylight's close,
By the western window looking out upon the amethyst and rose
Lighting up the leaden-gray tints of the tenting sky;
We were at the organ playing chords, were she and I—
On my knee her elbows rested, in her palms the dimpled chin,
Her eyes were soft with marvel of the childish thoughts within;
So, sometimes quietly she listened to the wandering chords I played,
Then with one small finger-tip upon the keyboard pressed the wee-bit maid;
"Is n't all 'e keys alike?" she asks, with earnest eyes,
"Why don't 'ey sound 'e same when 'oo plays as 'ey does when Baby tries?"
What could I teach her of the mysteries of songs as yet unsung,
Whose heart must not be wakened first by faults of falt'ring tongue?
How could my understanding prove to her the law that must apply
To harmony in everything — a woman weak as I!

How teach the very things that one day she must know —
As I had known them — life's experience proving that they must be so!

II.

But I talked and Baby listened, there as closed another day —
Amethyst and rose-tints mingling with the solemn gray,
Changing to the dusk of evening, out the western window where
Tired Nature closed her sunlit eyes in vesper prayer.
And I thought how much like children in our questioning of life,
Where God's grand key-note in our hearts sounds thro' the wilful strife —
How e'er we try them, touching here and there a tone,
Making discords — we, God's children, only little older grown
Than this babe, who, reaching tiny finger-tips,
Asks the self same question ever on our human lips!

III.

And I answer as God answered me, ah, long ago:
"Be patient yet a little longer; some day thou shalt surely know."
Some day! When out life's western window into its November gray
Shine the amethystine rose-tints of the closing day,
When with solemn, earnest faces, pressing closely to our Lord,
We shall learn what note we missed here of life's perfect chord.

Drifting Down the Bay.

Sweet the tiny bird that sung
Somewhere, — not far away, —
That forth its liquid music flung,
'Round which the shadows closed and clung
A year ago to-day,
With daisy-drift and drift of snow,
A long, long year ago.

Beneath the bird and bending spray
The limpid waters liquid lay,
And, on their bosom hid away,
A little wayward, wandering barque
Went drifting down the bay;
We drifted down the dimpled stream,
And dreamed again our love's sweet dream,
To-day a year ago!

. . . . . .

A little bird sings sweet and clear, —
Nearer yet and yet more near,
The same fair waters shadowed lay
A year ago and yet to-day;
But heart and voice are far away,
And I have naught to do but pray!
Oh, sad and sweet, and sweet and sad
The prayer I pray, the dream we had
A year ago to-day,
One little year to-day!

. . . . . .

Into the bosom of the night
The late bird, in his homeward flight,
No matter how so tired he be,
His sweet note droppeth cheerily,
The languid, sheltered waters lay,
As first they did upon that day
When out we drifted out of sight
Upon the shadowed stream.

Again in evening's merging dark
The little wayward, wandering barque
Is drifting down the bay:
We linger with the song that's sung,
'Round which the somber darkness clung,
As we, those mem'ries sweet among,
Dream over love's old dream,—
Dream life's and love's sweet dream.

Ad Elysium.

"Love, that is flesh upon the spirit of man."

I.

. . . What do we care for the world that 's without us?
What do we care for its pulse-beats about us?
Fold your arms yet more close, let your mouth rest on mine,
And there 's naught of this world, or the next, to resign!
In the half-light that makes but sweet virtues of vices,
In the music that breathes and the song that entices,
Love listens and groweth far paler than ashes,
And the bliss in my heart turns to tears on my lashes!

II.

. . . . . .

You hold me so close, but I still would be nearer,—
You, sweet, are so precious you could not be dearer!
Lift up, sweet, your face to my bosom that 's swelling
For the touch of your cheek and your lips, and the dwelling
Of kisses that cling as my kisses that kill you,
For the sweep of your breath, as my touch, sweet, to still you!

. . . . . .

III.

And the crown of our life is the darkness that closes,
And the fruit is far sweeter than, with thorns, still, the roses!
Fruits fail — and the wine drank drawn to the lees is,
And passion is more than the foam on the seas is!

Out of the past of desires and embraces,
Through the wisdom of years that lies deep in the traces
Of limbs locked with limbs, and hands clasped in love's trances,
Out from the stings and the tortures of lances

IV.

Barbed sweet with the poison of clinging and kisses,
Sweet with the trouble of turbulent blisses,—
Over the threshold of passionate prayer,
In thro' the furthermost portal of care,—
To the shrine where the cup that we hold hath its draining
In the draught of the wine of our passion and paining,
Is offered the peace of our sacrament, sweet,
And out of your arms, here, I kneel at your feet!
For, the sovereign of peace and of passion my part,
Thou art crowned as God's gift and the king of my heart!

Charity.

"And though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."

I.

Little reck we of the crosses lying in our neighbor's way,—
Little thought we give his losses in the labor of the day,
Though the ills we deem so petty, when he bears them all alone,
Change to great afflictions, always, when they come to be our own!
Though we know how light our burdens grow when sympathy is near,
Yet how often we are careless, heedless of the word of cheer
That might lighten all the darkness of the oftimes weary strife
That must mingle in the sweetest and the best of human life!

II.

It is not the steepest pathways we must climb with weary feet,
That are most devoid of resting, that have least of sunshine, sweet,
Not the sympathy the world gives, mingled with its implied blame,
That the heart feels most sincerely;—'tis the speaking of our name
With excuses for cach weakness — what the world may deem as weak!—
And a friendly hand clasp, meaning more than lips could ever speak!

III.

For we know life's weary journey leads up to the Heavenly
light,
And its tedious distance ends here with the coming of the night,
And its sorrows, lying heavy, almost more than we can bear,
— Human pity cannot heal them,— they are only soothed by
prayer!

IV.

But the average daily trials, testing patience, and the smart
Of wrong interpretation of the motives of the heart,—
These are they that make us children, all of us, at times, we
know,
— And the longings that possess us, and the sense of utter woe,
When the soul, almost, seems tired and the heart within is chilled,
And we long, like weary children, to be comforted and stilled!
Faith and Hope! The sweetest music lieth in the thought of ye,
But the spirit that doth breathe it is the soul of Charity!

Among the Pines.

"Look up t'ward the higher hills, where the waves of everlasting green roll silently into their long inlets among the shadows of the pines."

"—When from under this terrestrial ball,
He fires the proud tops of the Eastern pines."

I.

The sun falls golden on the mountains, gray and cold,
As ages passing ages, in the march of Time,
Unclose their record pages, sere and old,
To trace the unvoiced dreams of Nature's soul sublime: —

II.

What eye may pierce the secrets of the Master-mind,
Or penetrate the working of that Hand divine
While earth, containing laws surmounting reach of human-kind,
Is but a shadow of the world beyond,— a line
Or link connecting seen and unseen proofs of power
Not understood, tho' felt; acknowledged and dispensed
In revelations of the mind, while, hour by hour,
Corporeal forms delineate the spiritual in-sensed!

III.

The sun gleams golden thro' the forests of our God: —
A silence — as if Nature harkened to His voice,—
As, 'mong the pillared halls of Karnak, when untrod,
Perchance found Solitude the habitations of her choice:—

IV.

So, muteness reigns supreme among the pines, and Thought
Herself lies dreaming ;— far is revelry of strife —
— The triumphing of deadly wars of blood with blood
Removed : The martial din on chaos-fields of life
Is drowned within this breathless calm of sunset-flood.

V.

Among the pines, whose stately ranks proclaim abroad
An Aracarian majesty, two perfect chords
Commingle, each with each :— the presence of the Lord
That Eden-land beheld, anew affords
The underlying strains of love, begun in Heaven,—
— Whose key-note, sweetly fraught with majesty Divine,
Conceives the arborescent music, verdure-riven,
In hymns of silent, ceaseless praise, — earth-undefined.

. . . . . .

VI.

The lingering flush of many vanished summers, fair,
Like golden shadows, lies across each tree of state,
As if their passing touched in fond caresses there,
And tinged with glories of those realms where now they wait : —
Scarce just beyond are landscape shadows, cool and dim,
And God's hand hov'ring o'er the harp-strings of the wind ; —
— Replete the tones with tremulas that breathe of Him,
While the reluctant hours, with chiming vespers, soothe the mind.

VII.

The perfume-ladened air o'erwhelms each yielding sense, —
Powers of busy brain, beguiled by retrospective theme,
Lie dormant in the slumb'rousness intense
Pervading Nature's altar, sweet with prayerful dream.

VIII.

The sanctuary of the Lord! — Its far, blue dome
Gleaming betwixt the heights of massive columns, rare
In sacred sculpture of their fretted boughs: the home
And dwelling-place of peace, for God is there!

IX.

No burdening awe of Odin or of Thor here rise
In brooding shadow over the expectant hush
That fills the dim, perspective aisles, — no discords crush
The one grand strain within this chancel-place of Paradise.

X.

Still shadows gather, — deepening in the solitude,
And would the hov'ring darkness close without, — within?
The thousand silent voices, with His love imbued,
Are tearful with the burden of earth's weary sin!

XI.

"Be still, and know that I am God:" — the glories pale
O'er mystic mounts, like shad'wy lilies fall afar, —
At the thresholds of another world earth's visions fail
To pierce beyond the gleaming portal of a single star: —
As in this hallowed tenderness of grace, — to-day's, —
Is soft'ning every outline dim beneath His hand,
So, thro' the broken ways of life, His pity stays
To touch with subdued glories of the Better Land.

XII.

In jasper sunset-tints the day hath fallen asleep
Forever; — and its requiem is chanted low
And full of aught too deep for tears:

XIII.

The music of celestial spheres, in echo, lends
  Th' expectant hush of Nature's solitude, its calm, —
And all of God's great wisdom with his pity blends
  Throughout the mighty throbbing of this perfect psalm.

Baby, Dear!

"A little human hope of that or this."
"A silken peace thro' a golden ring."
"God made women to save men by love."

I.

A little child with hair of gold,
And smiling tiny mouth and eyes,
Where lingers memoried paradise,
Upon which dawned earth's strange surprise,
Like Raphael's Angel-child of old:
From off one shoulder, sweet and fair,
The frock slipped down in careless grace,
The twilight's jasper slants apace
And falls upon the dreamful face
That bears no shade of earthsome care:
Half ankle-deep beside the brook,
With feet that press the wild, sweet flowers,
And taking childish heed of hours,
On thee I smile and sigh to look,
Remembering how, one day, sometime,
I shall not smile as I do here,
To dream of lilies in thy hand,—
Sometime,—some day,—dost understand?
When doubt has passed the borderland,
When faith shall have ta'en the place of fear;
I sigh, for in my heart 's a tear
For all that may be, baby, dear!

II.

Sometime — one day thou'lt stand and wait,
Thy hands with lilies lifted,
Plucked just within the heavenly gate
Where thy spirit will have drifted,
Thy feet upon the asphodels
As now they are in clover,
And on thy face falls fairer light
When earth's sweet day is over:
When off thy shoulders, sweet and fair,
The robe of earthly fashion
Shall have given place to one up There
For Death's Annunciation:
Sometime! Ah me! Dost understand?
When life hath passed the borderland,
And knowledge, such as dawns not here,
Shall leave within thy heart no tear
For all that has been, baby, dear!

. . . . . .

III.

I smile for visions unfulfilled,—
For sweetnesses but yet begun,
Life's prizes that may yet be won,
And hopes beneath the natural sun
That mortal issues have not stilled;
As, on the human lips will rise
A pathos vocal to her ears
Who, list'ning, fitter music hears
Than earth's, that lacks high harmonies,

I shape anew my smile and sigh,
And lift my forehead from the dust —
Obeying, not because I must;
A child myself, and free from guile —
A child in faith that means great ends
T'ward which mounts up its visions grand; —
— In trust that clasps hope hand in hand,
And journeys toward the border land
With thanks for all the hidden good —
Without the doubt that apprehends —
A child — like thee, — dost understand?
Save that within *my* heart 's a tear
That 's not in thine, my baby, dear!

Oh, the Roses, Blushing Red!

Oh, the roses blushing red—
Red with passion's fire!
Oh, the music that is fled—
And the broken lyre!
Oh, the days that used to be
Perfect in their seeming!
Oh, the waking—sad to me
After such rare dreaming!

"Love is sweet and love is strong,"
Was his whisper tender,
"I have loved thee, Sweet, so long—
Hast thou naught to render
For the heart I gave to thee?"
— And his head leaned nearer—
"A heart, as true as heart can be
To thee, than life far dearer!"

Then he laid me on his breast
With his arms around me—
Where could be a sweeter rest
Than where love had bound me?
. . . . . .
Came the night with closing shade
O'er rose and vine a-clinging,
O'er the sweetest music made
By birds that then were singing!

Came the darkness o'er my soul
When love's low bells were chiming,
For sudden they began to toll
My heart's so sad repining!
So the music's gone away—
And the bird has hushed its singing,
For my Dear hath died—alas the day!
When joy's sweet bells were ringing!

But, oh, for the roses, blushing red—
Red with passion's fire!
Oh, for the music that is fled—
And life's broken lyre!
And, oh, for the days that used to be
Perfect in their seeming!
And, oh, the waking—sad to me
After such sweet dreaming!

Sappho.

Swifter than dreams—Sweeter than life—Stronger than death!

Do you know what you did by a touch of your lips—
By the sound of your voice—with a clasp and a kiss?
Did you drink of the wine of the cup that Love dips
Into the sea of mad, passionate bliss?

Do you know what I found in you, Sweet, as a man,
In one tortured, half-blinded look into your face?
How can I tell what weak words never can—
What came to my soul in that anguished embrace!

Ah, God! that a woman with soul and with heart,
Could have sounded such depths as the deeps I have known!
Could have gained more of bliss than e'en Heaven can impart,
In the sweets of man's arms and his kisses, alone!

Yes,—I ask it again,—do you know what you gave me
Last night as you lay in my arms—on my breast?
Shall I dream o'er the passion that never will leave me,
Nor give me an hour that my heart can call rest?

Forever and ever the fever will haunt me—
Relentless and merciless;—fierce as the breath
Of a fiend that pursues! Tell me, Sweet, do you want me
To love you like this to the hour of death?

Our Belovéd.

What shall we do for our Belovéd?
Shall we bring forth our offerings to cast upon the bier
Where lies the form of our sweet dead —
Rare flowers — our saddest gaze and love's regretful tear —
To lay upon life's lowly altar, when too late — at last?
When altar fires have slowly burned,
— The sacred flame our hearts desires have fed —
And slowly turned to ashes, cold and gray,
And left our longing souls benumbed, we've said
As hearts before have said, — as now we say:
"Alas! for life's sad lesson we have learned to-day —
The lesson that we knew not till too late we've learned!"
And cover up the embers turned to ashen hue;
The cold, pale ashes of life's duty done —
And sigh and think our day is o'er on earth,
That nevermore to Love's sweet graciousness can we give birth;
When in the vacant chamber, far remote, of life's sole worth,
Our soul doth sit apart and mourn for our belovéd one.

II.

What shall we do for our Belovéd?
Not so — not as the grievers-o'er of golden days that were,
When life's sweet sun was shining and we knew it not
Because of human blindness, and, because of human doubt,
We closed unconscious heart to life's interpreter,

And from the darkness of self-solitude we shut the sunlight
out;
But rather let us build a temple that shall stand amid
The plainer structures of life's dutiful,
Subservient toils; that shall not be hid
Among them, but that nobly-tow'ring shall be beautiful
With off'rings of our quiet moments in a life's unquiet
hours:
There let us place an altar to an earthly god —,
Life's golden opportunity, — and be there trod,
The aisles of this fair temple thus to be
Strewn with our fairest, sweetest flowers —
By worshippers well pleased to come awhile
And at the altar bow adoring knee;
E'en when the cares of life crowd thick and fast;
And, with our well-belovéd, there to cast
Sweet incense — and rare flowers of charity to bring,
Fair votive off'rings — and sweet chants to sing,
And kindle altar-fires that shall not turn
To cold, dead ashes, that long grief inters
To leave benumbed the hearts of love's sweet worshippers.

Naniae.

"The word of the wind to the sea."—

[TO MY SISTER.]

I.

You would know her if you saw her
Once, — forever after,
Know her by her eyes so true,
And her merry laughter, —

II.

Know her by her rosy mouth,
— Where the winds have kissed her
Blowing from the scented South, —
— Naniae, — that's my sister!

III.

In her hair of chestnut brown
Sunlight dies a-nestling, —
In her eyes, demure, cast down
Cupid lies a-resting! —

IV.

Have you seen her, do you 'spose?
You could not have missed her, —
Near her lips a dimple shows,
Where Love — (the rascal!) — kissed her!

v.

White laurustine, perfect flow'r,
Fragrant foam from out the sea,
Star-white sweet that lives an hour,
That the billow brings to me, —

vi.

She's like thee — oh, fair and sweet,
— Sun and winds have kissed her, —
But daintier, far, from brow to feet,
— Anemonae, my sister!

Sing, Sweet Harp!

["The rhythmic turbulence of blood and brain swept outward upon words."]

I.

Sing thou, sweet harp, whose dripping shell
  O'erbrims with tuneful measures
Of liquid music from the well
  Of Love's divinest treasures!
Whose slumbers draughts of sweetness cool
  The sacrificial fires
That fill our human hearts o'er full
  Of vainly sought desires:
Sing us a song, oh, sweet and sad,
  Sing of the trust that maketh glad,
Sing of the faith which Love hath had,—
  Of truth that Love admires;
Not of the twilight, shad'wy, cast
  By the trailing robe of the dark, dim past;
Not of the bird with broken wing,
  Not of thine own poor broken string,
Sweet shattered thing!
  But soft and low that sacred lips have sung:
The lips to which our own, in time o'erpast, have clung,
  Low and soft the music sweeter than our due,
Our sighing hearts, in time o'erpast, once knew.
  Sing these, oh, shattered shell of dripping music clear,
Pour out the songs our listening souls deem dear!

II.

The days wherein these songs were sung are fled,—
The life that stirred these songs is dead,—
And, to our restless hearts we shall have said:
"How fleet the passing tides of sweet desire!
How false the fitful glow of passion-fire!
How vain the aims to which our longing souls aspire!"
When, with the tides of time 't is ebb, not flow,—
When that the fires of life are burning low,—
When that our hearts have learned to prove them so!

III.

And yet we war not with nor tide nor time;
With life's fair harp, whose music was sublime,
The life like some sweet story told in broken rhyme!
But yet of past-time music what remains?
The heart's low echo of the sweet, hushed strains,—
The old-time longing and the sad refrains!

IV.

Still wake again, fair harp, for pulseless fingers sweep thy strings,
And to thy music some sweet voice long hushed still sings
And bringeth back life's half-remembered things.

Regret.

I.

I have wept for the roses that blossomed to fade
Away from the world's busy marts,
When I've thought of the gladness their fragrance had made
In its restless and care-throbbing hearts!
When I've heard the sweet song of melodious bird
Somewhere in bright regions of light, —
How I've longed that an echo might only be heard
Floating down the deep darkness of night!

II.

There are rivers of waters so peaceful and sweet —
Their shores sloping down fair beside,
Where the glories of purity, soulful, complete,
As the sunlight, forever abide, —
But I'm sad for the water's murmurless calm,
— Sad for the untrodden shores, —
And I list for some ripple beladen with balm,
And I sigh for the dipping of oars! —

III.

But, fairest the dream that is soonest dispelled
— Of something we never may reach, —
Most precious the fetters our dreaming that held
Are the thoughts that have never found speech!
So a tear for the waking that cometh at last, —
But a smile for the dreaming, tho' vain! —
For the glimmering treasure-light flooding the past,
— Tho' dimmed by the shadow of pain.

Song.

There is a land, so wondrous fair,
Where flowers bloom in beauty rare,
— Where naught but music fills the air,
Where my Belovéd dwells :—

The sunshine gleams in purest ray,—
Night cannot come to 'sturb the day,—
Think'st thou that land is far away,
Where my Belovéd dwells?

Its birds, I know, will ne'er depart :—
Its music floats o'er Rapture's mart,—
For lo ! that land is mine own heart,
Where my Belovéd dwells !

Perhaps — at Last.

I stooped to lift a blossom up
A child had dropped erstwhile —
A rose-bloom with its petaled cup,
Cast downward with a smile
At eventide; the rose was white
That lay there at my feet, I knew,
Yet there beneath the sunset light,
(I cannot tell what made it so) —
Still this I saw, and felt and knew —
That something from the tender flush
Of twi-lit skies of roseate hue
Gave to the rose its blush!
A light that fell from tender skies
To tenderer flower beneath the sun —
A rose a child with sleep-lade eyes
Had dropped when day was done:
What meaning could it have to me;
Or what, because the skies smiled on it,
Hath made it fairer yet to see —
What mystic beauty won it?
— I said, and saying, in my heart,
As ever with a flower or child
(Who ever thinks of them apart?)
This thought came, and I smiled:
That one day — some day — we shall fling
To earth life's fairest flower plucked purely,

When sunset to our eyes shall bring
  The sleep-lade shadows surely,
Perhaps, when we go home at last,
  One who may follow nearly,
And look upon our blossoms cast,
  With vision seeing clearly,
Will say: "Life's flowers were white, forsooth,
  And now its sun is setting,
Whence shineth down the light of truth,
  All human faults forgetting,
Doth fall upon them, making bright,
  With brightness born of Heaven,
Doth lend its amethystine light,
  That means with God — 'Forgiven.'"

Pleading.

Love me, Sweet, with thine own soul,
As thou canst a woman;
Give not part, but give the whole,
Thou divinely human!
Love me with thy manhood strong,
Strong and true and tender,—
All that doth to love belong
Unto me surrender!

Love me with thy voice that turns
Faint with passion's power
When your soul with passion burns
At night's dusk-dark hour!
With thy manhood me imbue,
As man can a woman,—
Love me, Sweet, as I do you,—
For we both are human!

A Scarlet Rose.

"Quæ mentem insania mutat?"

I.

You gave me the rose as you did the caress,
With the mien of a king, and the grace of a lover:
But the heart of a woman is mine to confess,
And 'tis hard to conceal what a man may discover.
How I longed, in the throes of a nameless unrest,
For a draught of the wine of your lips and your eyes,
For your heart, in the place of the rose on my breast,
And your breath on my bosom in passionful sighs!
A thirsty Bacchante — the cup that you gave me
I had quaffed to the dregs but an hour before,
Tho' drunk with the lees, but one draught more had saved me,
For I sure should have died e'er the drinking was o'er!
There was death in the draught,— but 't were better than living,—
'T was a dream,— but 't were kinder than waking to me,—
And passion more sweet than regretful retrieving,
And red roses are warmer than white ones can be!

II.

There was death in the draught,— there was heaven in the drinking;
It was nectar,— but such as no god ever sips,—
And my soul fell asleep, and my senses were sinking,
In the light of your eyes — with the wine of your lips!

. . . . . .

III.

'Twas a dream! It was poison that, thirsting, I tasted,
And the chalice lies low with the dregs it contained,
And the rose, with the wine that the dead years have wasted,
Is red with the lees that its whiteness have stained.
But, tho' 'twere my life were the cost of the blessing
Of your touch, as of old, on my brow and my hair,
I would yield it up gladly, my darling, possessing
The thought that one day you would know and would care
How I longed, in those days of our sweet, secret passion,
—As I do here to-night in my helpless unrest,—
As I have ever since, in a woman's mad fashion,
For your heart in the place of the rose on my breast!

At Alexandria.

"—— So let them die!
The world shows nothing lost;
Therefore, not blood! above or underneath
What matter? . . . .
. . "As sword returns to sheath,
So dust to grave, but souls find place in Heaven."

I.

The splendors of the setting sun shone fair upon
The lofty domes of Alexandria.
Its crimson-crested radiance rested soft
Upon the restless sea that circled Pharos Isle,
And o'er one hundred miles the evening dusk
Went forth to fall upon her marble heights,
As fain to die in one lingering caress
Of that sweet Charity: her watch-towered walls;
But yet the power of Nature's loveliness
Was vain to soften human hearts, and vain
Her beauty gleamed and glowed and then died out,
To yield apace to shadows dark as Hell,
That should befit a scene as devilish as her agonies.

II.

Within the walls of Greece's vast amphitheatre
Threescore one thousand voices rise and fall
In ceaseless shout and murmur, like a sea
That wars in constant clamor with the elements in storm;—
Row on row of eager faces scan th' arena sands;
A gleam of fiery eyes, and glittering teeth,

And heavy lashing of the bars that hold encaged
The savage beasts that wait their liberty:
The waste of sands — the subdued growls that fill the stifled air; —
The sometimes hush that speaks of something dread to come,
Like Nature's own before her direst storms,
When low the thunder rolls and growls, and fitful lightnings flash the bolts between.

. . . . . .

III.

As one, o'ercome at noontide with the heat
Of Summer sun and labor in the field,
Sinks down fatigued with eyes half-closed
And powers spent, and caring naught
For things around: the waving grass —
The gleaming scythe — the loaded wains, and breath
Of clover-bloom and belted bee, and yields,
Forsooth, in sweet forgetfulness, to dreams,
As such a one, beneath the sea of wild
And savage-eager faces all intent upon th' arena,
Crouches a man, — half nude, and all in apathy.
"Bring forth the victim!" rings th' excited cry —
"Bring forth the bestiary doomed to die!"
And thousand-throated demons dance before his sight,
And yell defiance in his ears to-night!

IV.

He 's on his feet! — above — around — the banks
Of eager faces on him fixed he meets with scorn: — the muscles firm,

Like knotted cords upon his flesh stand out, —
The symbols of the mighty strength that lies within. —
The signal 's giv'n : — on he comes —
The beast a-thirst for human blood !
With one wild bound the tiger reaches — clears him —
And, long paces off falls with howls of rage !
And thrice the baffled foe falls prone
To rise with force and rage redoubled : Now
His eyes are balls of fire, and his jaws,
All foam-beflecked, just show the cruel teeth,
As slow, with cautious cat-like tread,
He gains approach, as if to sniff his prey.

v.

And now he springs — and man and beast in deadly contest fall : —
The multitude with terror-stricken faces watch
Th' inhuman fray : And these are men of Greece !
For their fair pleasure Dacian men must die !
And calmly rise and set her suns upon such scenes
As 't were stern Valor's self her tribute paid
To Valor's own ; — But look !
Upon the naked shoulders of the man
The tiger's paws fall heavily ; — his jaws
Are open, and the breath he breathes
Is full and hot : Back falls the Gladiator's head,
And with his straightened arms he grasps the tiger's neck,
While his own blood is flowing fresh with every effort made.

VI.

Down — down — he bears the struggling brute —
A crash of breaking bones — a low, deep growl —
A gurgling sound half-heard : — he struggles still —
The claws tenacious keep their hold,
He weakens — sinks and falls ; — the contest done ;
The blood of man and beast commingling flow,
And drenches all the sand ; — and now
The gladiator leans upon the carcass, and from off
One bloody claw, a shred of human flesh he plucks,—
his own,—
Then stands before th' acclaiming multitude
Whose shouts his triumph ring with deaf'ning uproar,
As he lifts the bloody-dripping trophy of his deeds
And flings it from his sight,
Then sinks upon the sands in faint recline —
As slow the life-blood ebbs and drops.

. . . . . .

The stifling scenes are half forgot,— his breath
Comes fainter still and almost stops —
The devilish yells that hailed the onset sound no more : —
The gleaming spears lie prone — and fainter sinks
The tumult to a hushéd murmur : changed
To other, sweeter sounds as heard afar —
And then he falls asleep and sweetly dreams : —
As one who, wounded in the battle, falls
And sinks upon the field, his shield upon —
The contest fairly fought — the victory won, —
Hears 'round about him noises vague and dim,
While still sounds on the battle done to him,

And dreams, while Death's white angel hovers near,
Of other scenes and faces, grown more dear
For all the tumult, triumph and acclaim,
And, dreaming, hears sweet voices call his name,
And in such dreaming sees each fresh, fair field,
That in his youth its beauty used to yield,
And on his brow stills feels the cool, soft touch
Of Nature's sweet restorer healing such
As come to her with wounds gained in the strife
That proveth every well-won battle on the field of life: —
And so, in such fair dreaming, fain forgets to pray —
And in such dreaming sweetly sleeps alway,
Till, waking somewhere where the sounds of battle cease,
He knows the sweeter hushes of eternal Peace!

Adrift.

I.

I, lingering, stand upon the strand,
— For I am Fancy's daughter,—
And wait for the boat that is idly afloat
Far out upon the water, —
That is far away on the glittering bay,
In the shadows of the gloaming:
And sad were the cost if my barque be lost
On the shores where Love is roaming!

II.

With drooping sail my barque comes back
Across Time's wide, wide ocean:
No zephyr follows in her track
To give her speedy motion,
She floats away thro' night and day,
Within the twilight gleaming,
But sweet were the cost were the rudder lost
On shores where Love lies dreaming!

III.

. . . . . .
I watch and wait till all too late;
Till the night's deep shadow falling,
Till the midnight mist my brain has kist,
And the midnight winds are calling
About my head that my darling's dead,
And I stand sadly weeping:
But sweet is the cost, for my barque was lost
By the shores where Love lies sleeping.

Bane and Balm.

"One moment, and our hearts have flown
Through clasping hands and fond lips meeting;
The next, we stand and wait alone,
While memory holds the place of greeting."

I.

Yes,— you 're gone — I 'm alone — and I 'm crazed with the ache
That lies like the weight of a ton on my heart!
I tried to keep calm, when you went, for your sake —
Concealing her pain is a woman's life-part!
I look on your face, and the world fades before me, —
I feel but your touch and I faint with the bliss, —
O, what is the influence, Sweet, you have o'er me?
What do you put in the balm of a kiss?

II.

I know but one thing, — and that is that you kissed me,
And held me, and soothed me, last night in this room: —
I wonder — God help me! — if you ever have missed me
As I miss you now, in this desolate gloom!
I look at the pillow — your head there has nested! —
I dare not e'en touch it, to-night, here alone!
I fell on my knees there, last night, and just rested
My cheek, when you 'd gone, with my prayer and my moan. —

III.

The pillow was warm, — and I buried my face
Deep down in the dent that your dear one had made,
And I poured out my hunger — there 's left there the trace! —

I dare not go near it, to-night, I'm afraid!
—I'm afraid of the passion poured out in my praying,—
As I knelt all alone in my torture of pain,
—Yes, I prayed,—but I scarcely knew what I was saying:
I only knew this—that you 'd left me again!

IV.

Oh, God! could I sleep and know not awaking
Between the sweet times of your coming, my king!
O, God! could I hush this bitter heartaching
The desolate hours of your absence must bring!

. . . . . .

V.

Make the lock secure in the door as you close it!—
Put the world from us far as is darkness from light!—
Let the dusk be upon us,—we often have chose it,—
It brings us but nearer each other to-night.
Don't talk!—Let the silence be sweeter than ever,
Don't speak—for my hunger's beyond my control!—
Let me rest in your arms, (would God 't were forever!)—
O, bring just one moment of peace to my soul!

VI.

No, I can 't see your face,—I have looked till I 'm dying
With the bitter starvation for you in my life,—
—Let me reach for your lips in their passionate sighing,—
Call me once,—just to-night, by that sacred name—*wife!*

VII.

Do you think if I died, and you over my casket
Should bend, and should speak to me just that one word,
Do you think—no, my heart is too full now to ask it,—

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My Sweet, in that kiss I both asked and you — heard !
Let me reach to your mouth, O, my Life ! let me keep there
My own till I drink, in my thirst, or I die ! —
— Put your face on my bosom, — is it blesséd to rest there,
The world so far from us, — we here — you and I?

VIII.

Oh, world ! with your fever and madness of passion,
—Your pleasures and vices that beat at flood-tide
In the pulses of men in your old, reckless fashion,
There is mingled the peace of your altars, beside ! —
And you lay by the sweets of your roses carnation,
The lilies carved white as the soul of a child,
And you lift, with the cup of your votive-oblation,
The sacrament wine that 's for lips undefiled !

IX.

What were the years of the tumult and paining
That some hearts call happiness — comfort or bliss, —
What were a life of abandon's mad gaining,
Without love, when compared with one moment of this?
— One moment to rest in the peace of your presence, —
Just to look on your face, — and to hear but your voice !
Where it mine — or the wealth of earth's kingdoms without you, —
Or a lifetime of toil with you, which were my choice?

X.

. . . . . .

Lift me up ! — let me wake ! — tell me, Sweet, I 'm not dying ! —
— Is it Heaven — and this the reward for Life's pain?
— O, how I have missed you ! — O, the peace of this lying
At rest, — and to know you are with me again !

Don't speak ! let the silence be sweeter than ever ; —
Don't cry, Sweet, lest tears be beyond our control, —
Let me rest in your arms, (thank God, 't is forever !)
Let the pain we 've both suffered bring peace to each soul.

XI.

Let me reach to your lips, O, my Life ! let me keep there
My own till I drink in my thirst till I die, —
— Put your face on my bosom, — is it blessed to sleep there —
The world so far from us, — we here, — you and I ?

. . . . . .

O World ! yes, you lay by your roses carnation
Your lilies — carved white as the soul of a child !
And you lift, with the chalice of votive-oblation,
The sacrament wine that 's for lips undefiled !

The Dream of To-Morrow.

Like the mem'ry of a sweet, sad song,
  Like a hope that was born and died,
Like a faith that we cherished, pure and strong,
  Like the outward-going tide ;—
Like the prayer that we prayed, when the heart was full,
  In some sanctuary dim,
Like the close of a psalm that was beautiful, —
  Like the chant of a vesper-hymn, —
It floated out and was gone e'ermore, —
  It died, and was lost to earth ;
It left the heart bereft and sore
  At the loss of its priceless worth ; —
It glimmered afar like a beautiful star
  That 's seen through the clouds of sorrow, —
Too fair for Sorrow's clouds to mar : —
  — That rare, sweet dream of To-morrow.

Tempest-Tossed.

I.

We stood together, you and I,
On that night that is long since dead,
That night with the dew-damp grass at our feet,
The roses overhead!
The rose trees that drooped with their sensuous blooms,
Unquenched by the fall of the dew,
And they filled my veins with their scarlet fire
As I stood there alone with you!

II.

That night is dead in passionate June,
'Twas three long years ago!
The birds were perfect in their tune,
The waters in their flow;
No birds but June birds sing as those!
In dusky shadows winging,
Their liquid notes adown the dark
The nightingales were flinging!
I heard them there, but it seemed like a dream,
For your face in its passionate splendor,
As dusk as the shadows that sheltered the rose,
Was over me sweet and tender!
Your breath on my cheek, your touch on my brow,
Your clasp and your mouth's soft sighing,

I felt it all, as you swore your vow,
As a soul must feel heaven when dying!

. . . . . .

Once more I stand where the roses burn
Their blood-red flames to ashes,—
The dew-drops on their petaled hearts,
The tear drops on my lashes,
And I feel in my veins the olden fires,
As my heart throbs out your name,
And I know that forever the old desires
Will be the same!

III.

And so, like a dream, it comes back to me,
Your face and your sweet mouth's sighing,
And once more in my dreams I seem to be,
To-night, in your strong arms lying!

. . . . . .

O roses of flame! O heart of fire;
O nightingale in the copse!
O heart! that throbbed with your mad desire;—
O storm-tossed hopes!

The Ebb of Love.

I said in my heart: If the skies had grown dark,
And had been tempestuous weather,
If storms had beaten upon our barque,
As we two sailed together,
If the billows of fate had parted us,
While our tears with the surf were flowing,
If our love had gone out as the day goes out,
When the tide was outward going,—

If the pitiless winds of circumstance,
In life's uncertain weather,
Had beaten upon our clinging hearts,
We, at least, could have died together!
And I could have lain upon your heart,
And breathed, thro' your lips, my final breath,
And I think there'd have been no shadow of smart,
Nor sting, in the passing of death;

But to have *drifted* apart, as we have done,
With the skies so fair above us,
For not one reason,—no, not one,
And not even a test to prove us!
To have drifted apart, as the ships that go out,
One to the East, and one to the West,—
That leave no trace on the restless waves,
As our dream leaves none in your breast!

And, alas! for us both, and the vain regret,
And the constant thought of it all, I say,—
And, alas! that we two should ever have met,
To be as we are to-day!

The Lute of Life.

I dreamed a dream of a golden Lyre
  Attuned by the touch of Truth,
Its gold was tried in the furnace-fire
  That burned with the passions of youth;

And the breath of the Lute that floated far
  Was the strain that an Angel sung,
Whose echoes were caught from the morning star
  When the heavens and earth were young.

Its chords were pure and the Lute was fair
  As harps in the Land untrod;
For I dreamed that the song that I listened to there
  Had its melody written by God!

But the star that shone in the early morn
  Is hid in the noonday-light; —
And the Lute that sang when the day was born,
  Is veiled from the souly sight!

And I list for the echoes, soft and sweet
  In a power untried before —
Floating down on the tide of Time to meet
  The waves of Eternity's Shore.

Jealousy.

The lights are out, and the laughter hushed,
And the music has ceased its sighing,
The sweet, rare breath of the roses, crushed,
Fills the air where the roses are dying:—
The last song sung, with its sweet refrain,
And all of the guests departed,
And I wait here, with a weary pain,
A little sadder-hearted
For the lights that gleamed awhile ago,—
For the songs I heard them singing,—
For the sound of a lute that sweet and low,—
And the scent of the roses clinging.—

For the broken chalice low, that lies
With its sweetness all untasted,
The cup that was filled in Paradise,
Whose sacred wine is wasted!
Shall I stoop and lift up from the rest
One passion-rose to cherish,
That lay upon some woman's breast
To bloom and then to perish?
Shall I lift the shattered cup, alas!
And bathe my hands in the blood-red wine?
Or, shall I, rather, straightway pass
The ruins of what was never mine?

For what does it matter, have I said,
The throbbing heart when the lights are out,
When the laughter's hushed and the music fled,—
What does it matter, faith or doubt?
Yes, the lights are out and the laughter hushed,
And the music has ceased its sighing,
And the roses at my feet are crushed,
And the chalice lowly lying:
The last song sung with its sweet refrain,
And all of the guests departed,
And I wait here with a weary pain,
But so much sadder-hearted!

I Would not Wake the Lute.

SONG.

"Und wende den Blick nicht wieder weg von mir!"

I would not wake the lute's sweet tone
In dreams as those of yore,—
To wander mid the past alone,
And breathe those sighs once more!

I'd ne'er disturb the deep, sweet rest
Of strains long-hushed with tears,
To mingle with their fragrance, blest,
The mists of vanished years!

I'd bury chords of long-ago
'Neath Mem'ry's moonlit beams—
Till, in the sweeter By-and-By,
They rise in Heavenly themes!

Noli Aemulari!

Oh, human heart, thou canst not know
God's will,
— His devious ways of wisdom prove, and so
Be still!
Too weak art thou to question long
In vain,—
T'were better, far, in faith to grow more strong
Again; —
Tho' sorrow's and tho" joy's strong tides
Between,
'T were sweeter than all else besides,
To lean
Upon the Love that comes in ways
Unknown —
Thou canst not pass thro' shadowed days
Alone!
Let all the longing and the hopes thou cherished
So,—
Let all the strangely-sweet desires,
Go!
So fair were they on earth? So richly treasured
Here?
—More fair and e'en in more abundance measured,
More dear

They 'll be within the Land where sunlight falleth
Ever, —
And where the shade of fear appalleth
Never.
So, let the fair and fondly-cherished dreams
Depart,
'T were sweeter, far, than now it seems,
Poor heart,
Sometime, within the Better Land,
To know
'T were best to be, when thou canst understand,
Ev'n so.

Good-by, Sweetheart.

Good-by, Sweetheart!
The thought that quivers in my breast
Is but an arrow winging swift and free,
That takes not life away, but, breaking all its rest,
Must separate us ever — me and thee!
I wonder doth it grieve thy soul, as mine to part?
To say, good-by, Sweetheart?
Good-by, Sweetheart!
As Summer leaves her restful calm on earth —
Her breathless silence, like a dream of peace,
Ev'n so I would that in thy path some gentle birth
Of sacred recollections, when shall cease
The music of to-day, my aught of bliss impart
To comfort thee, Sweetheart!
Good-by, Sweetheart!
I hear the vesper voices call, —
But yet thy soul's dear grace I cannot lose,—
We view our paths which lie apart; the tears must fall,
We can but pray, our ways we may not choose,
But Heaven waits for both beyond, where thou and I
Need never say good-by!
Sweetheart, Good-by!
Before us fall such strange, strange mists
Where once there was but sunshine and fair skies,—
I reach my hands to thee in vain, — for Fate insists
Love's links must be unclasped: so close thine eyes
While on thy brow I lay my last and tender touch, and sigh
To breathe, Sweetheart, Good-by!

Gold and Purple.

I.

"Pansies are for thoughts," I said, and lay
The flower he gave me yesterday,
Upon the pillow near the tiny face,
That scarce seemed larger with its month of tender grace;—
For little weeks ago I did not know the bliss
That, could the wealth of the world be mine, I would not change for this.
"And pansies are for thoughts," I knew he thought as I did,
That there upon the pillow lay one thought of God divided!
A purple pansy, with its heart of golden sunshine, purely—
An infant's soul the other part
Of God's great thought, most surely!
And, looking on them, could we say
Which, out of such completeness,
The babe, or the flower plucked yesterday,
Had most of hidden sweetness!

II.

Oh, dimly purple as the dark
Of bay-crowned muses' tresses,
Holding within thy depth one spark
Of sunlight, vaguely guesses
She, who to lips scarce worthy, lifts
Such cup of human wonder,

Of other of God's greatest gifts
His goodness lying under;
Some prescience of the babe that sleeps
Beside the flow'r dropt lightly,
Within the heart its music keeps
That solves all doubt arightly: —
Oh, little life, outreaching far
Beyond love's orb of kisses,
Whose future years, that somewhere are,
Lie dimly — dark as this is,
Whose royal purple's rich in shade
As oriental eves are,
As perfect is thy future lade —
As stainless as these leaves are?
Upon thine unaccomplished fate
The silence falls in singing,
And Faith, that needeth not to wait,
Sets all her joy-bells ringing;
And pansies are for thoughts — and both
Are God's thought, said we, parted,
How canst thou, then, sweet little babe,
Be other than pure-hearted?

O, Happy Waters!

TO MY HUSBAND (BEFORE OUR MARRIAGE).

"I found a little stream of clear cold water, dancing over the porphyry boulders and singing to itself;—I drank and laved my hands in it, and smiled at it and loved it, and lay down and rested by it, and it continued its singing always."—

I.

Thou smiled upon the water,—happy waters thus to know thy smile!—
And drank, and laved thy hands, and cooled thy pulse's heat,—
And lay thee down and rested there awhile,
—The silvery song still rippling at thy feet:—

II.

And thou wast weary, and so lay thee down beside the stream, ah, me!
Thou, footsore, and with heart discouraged,—craving rest,
And fev'rish with the thirst of hearts before, and hearts that yet shall be,
—The sunlight shining down upon thy breast,

III.

And thou did'st sleep:—and dream, perchance, and in those dreams what bliss was thine?
What hopes, forsooth, long-cherished, found fruition sweet?
What brave ambitions bursting earth's confine,
Did make thy life, one hour, at least, complete?

IV.

Or, did no dreaming lie upon thy soul, to lend thee peace or pain, —
But sleep, that, biding softly, gave thee perfect rest?
(I only know I would that thou didst sleep again, —
My heart the happy sunshine on thy breast !)

V.

I would thou were once more a-weary, and thy pulse at fever-heat, —
— Thy heart an-hungered, and thy lips a-thirst
For rippling waters flowing at thy feet,
And silv'ry song upon thy heart to burst !

VI.

O, sunlit, happy waters, flowing, that his smile has rested on !
O, happy music sounding on his ear ! —
O, restless flow, that fell his pulse upon, —
O porphyry banks his form has rested near ! —

VII.

Would he once more were weary, oh, my life, and thou that happy stream !
— Were he a-thirst, — and ye, oh, lips of mine, the cup
Whereof he drank to sink to sleep and dream,
— O, life and lips ! to his own lifted up !

VIII.

O, happy fate ! what more had life to yield, or hope to proffer me ;
What hath this world beside — or earth to give !
What sweeter peace than this could Heaven offer me, —
Than that his life within my own should live ?

IX.

That he, a thirst, should freely drink, and cool the fever heat,
And lave his pulses in the life that flows in mine,—
And, smiling, own that life to him were sweet?
(O, soul of mine, that, hung'ring, gives no sign !)

X.

O, sunlit, happy waters, flowing, that his smile has rested on !
O, happy music, sounding on his ear !
O, restless flow that fell his pulse upon —
O, happy banks his form has rested near !

The City Beautiful.

Sometimes, when the day is ended,
And its round of duties done,
I watch at the western windows
The gleam of the setting sun,
When my heart has been unquiet,
And its longings unbeguiled
By the day's vexatious trials,
And cannot be reconciled,
I look on the slope of the mountains
And over the restless sea,
And I think of the Beautiful City
That lieth not far from me,—
And my spirit is hushed in a moment,
As the twilight falls tender and sweet,
And I cross, in my fancy, the river,
And kneel at the Master's feet.
And I rest in the shade that there falleth
From the trees that with healing are rife,—
That shadow the banks of the river,—
The River of Water of Life.
And, some time, when daylight is ended,
And the duties He gave me are done,
I shall watch at life's western windows
The gleam of its setting sun.
I shall fall asleep in the twilight,
As I never have slept before,

To dream of the beautiful City
  Till I waken to sleep no more.
There will fall on my restless spirit
  A hush, oh, so wondrously sweet,
And I shall cross o'er the river
  To rest at the Master's feet!

To a Vase-Breaker.

Iconoclast, of fame more fair,—
  Destroyer of vases,—
Than his who smites the idols, rare,
  In merest social phases,
What is the power thy presence keeps,—
  What magnetism holdeth,
That, in thine absence, perfume sleeps,
  That the red, red rose enfoldeth?
Alas! for the cup that shattered lies,
  And the crushed, rare, damask roses,—
Alas, that all the fragrance dies
  When grief the wreck discloses!
I stooped to catch,— if aught were there,—
  Above the atoms shattered,
Some lingering breath of their despair
  From leaves that 'round lay scattered;
But, ah! as man's and woman's lot,
  When Love's sweet share's divided,
The fragrance floated where you went;
  The ruins stayed where I did!

Unwritten Music.

I.

Above, where the moonbeam, glittering, strayeth,
And glances its crystal breast, trembling with light, —
Afar, where the billow, foam-crested, soft playeth,
And, rippling its vesper-song, passeth from sight, —
Above the ruby stars, — Eve's gems, — are gleaming,
And watch o'er fair Nature's sleep, gentle and still, —
And, where cool zephyr's breath, guarding her dreaming,
Are whispering to rosebuds to leave them at will; —

II.

Up o'er the steep where the green-swarded highlands
Are basking in smiles from the sunny blue sky, —
And give richer gems than far ocean islands,
Or Ocean's deep breast where the coral caves lie, —
Up o'er the heights where the Chamois, climbing,
Is wand'ring all day in his freedom, so light,
Wanders all day, till the sun's rays declining,
Descend with the starry-gemmed mantle of night;

III.

Down in the home of the dew-drops and roses, —
Roses that faded at summer's farewell,
And died, — but whose secret no song-bird discloses,
And naught but the summer their story can tell; —
Their crimson leaves scattered, — a fragrant pall making, —
Around us they lie in their beauteous sleep, —
While starlight and zephyr last farewells are taking,
And nesting birds fondly their sweet vigils keep.

IV.

And, o'er the highland and lowland and billow,
Over each spot where deep twilight-shades fall,
Come silent voices blending o'er Nature's pillow,—
Come many soft whispers, like Memory's call,
That tell of the bright worlds of beauty around us —
And breathe of our earth as at first it was given,
'Till soft strains of music, enchanted, have bound us,
And opened to fancy the portals of Heaven!

V.

'T is strange, how the unwritten music of silence
Can bear away hearts in celestial-like strains, —
— 'T is strange how a sweet-warbling bird, by its guidance,
Bears the heart on its wings, and the golden shore gains!
There is beauty immortal in twilights resplendent,
And praise in the hearts which in Nature rejoice, —
That hear, throughout all her bright glory attendant,
Th' unwritten music of Jehovah's own Voice!

You Kissed Me!

I downward looked into the depths
Of soul that showed as dark as night,
Nor saw a trace of clearer light;
The path was closed and sealed with God's own seal.

As one who suffers long nor weeps,
I shut my eyes and stand and wait
The summons of a far-off fate
Our life and death alike that keeps.

A late bird in the homeward flight,
With pinions drooping wearily,
Into the bosom of the night
One sweet note droppeth cheerily;
No matter how so tired he be—
His note of sweetness droppeth he!
Methinks my heart, tho' tired, could sing
Its note of praise at eventide,
If evening's hour, at last, would bring
The rest of home! Than all beside
More sweet to lowly-drooping wing
Of spirit lade with Marah's spray,
Than any other earthly thing,
When falls the twilight of the day.

You kissed me,—and it seemed a dream
Had passed the bounds of life and thought;

The music of love's sacred theme
Into my soul its sweetness brought.
I looked above and heard a strain
Of sweet, perplexéd music rise
And caught a glimpse of Paradise,
And God with longing filled my heart;
I could not have more near than this
The far-off dream of passion's bliss;
And far away the music throbbed again,
And filled my soul with nameless pain!
Unconscious, dear musician, tell,
(That hold'st a strange and wondrous power,
So sweet in life's still changing hour),
Did'st know what soundless depths thou d'st stirred,
When, without sound of lyre or lute,
But from thy lips love's sweet salute
Fell deep within my heart — a dripping shell
Of liquid music down a darksome well?

And so, upon the sloping altar-stairs,
Away from earthly life to God,
I, pausing, turn from having trod,
And, half within the sweet, dim light of hope
That faint encompasses the way
And smiles the darkest night to day,
And half within the dusk of large despair,
I pause, and learn life's sweetest lesson there.

Unstained Purple.

"—— the sighing years
Re-sighing on my lips renunciative; ——"

I.

If you were dying, darling, in a far-off land,—
Beyond the distance lying between you and me,
And you should long, in that lone hour, to clasp my hand
Across the waste of waters there would be,
In spirit I could grant, yes, all the tenderness of days gone by,—
But 't were not mine to overpass the gulf that lies,
For not with merely friendship's grief and friendship's sigh
Could I, Belovéd, look into your dying eyes,—
And, should we meet each other here to-night,
—As I have longed and prayed that we might meet,—
If, on my heart's long hungering should fall the old love's light,
And you were kneeling at my feet,
I would not dare to lift your weary head
And lay it on my bosom in the old-time way,
I would not dare to listen to the words that once you said
—Before that weary years o'erpassed our parting day!

II.

Sweet, if you died to-night, and I beside your bier
Should stand, and know that you were free
From all that bound you to another here—
And at this hour of death,—at last,—belonged to me,
Could know that in the Better Land, beyond the crystal Sea,
Would cease my endless longing, and my heart's low, famished cry,—
—Could know that only death could give you back to me,—
I fain, to-night, would pray: My Father, let me die!

Cigar Smoke.

'T was a year ago — a day like this —
I settled myself in my cushions at ease;
Forgetful of dates? — Is a woman amiss
When she makes up her calender out of a kiss —
Out of an hour or so of bliss —
— Or a day and a night, — if you put it so?
I leave it to you; you ought to know!
Yes! men were made for women to please:
To drink the wine and to leave the lees,
You reclined somewhere — I think not far, —
With your eyes half closed, and a fragrant cigar
Half-smoked in your passionate lips,
I envied the weed — did I tell you so then?
I felt your hand as it toyed with the rose
That lay on my bosom — yes, I suppose
At least a dozen or so of men
Have given me crimson roses since then,
And dozens of others before that too;
But — well, you know, they were none of them *you!*

Perhaps 't was the wine — I don't know, that we quaffed,
For you smoked, and we chatted and sipped and laughed —
But your hand still toyed with the flower —.
The firelight flamed in the open grate,
The curtains were drawn — 't was cosy there!

And *dangerous too?* Perhaps so; well,
Such things are to live, *mon cher*, not to tell.
Oh! I 'd give ten years of my life for that hour —
To live once more as we lived it then,
My king, from among the world of men
I 've met in my lifetime, — Ah!
Over your wine-cup filled with wine —
Your eyes half closed (with the smoke, may be),
And the dusk too deep for either to see, —
But quite light enough, you said, *cher ami.*

I wonder how many have cradled your head,
Their bosom your pillow, their heart your bed
For love's own dreams? —
And something more, I thought 't was then!
Did I count you different from most of men?
No! I 'm just what I seem; 't is the smoke in my eyes,
'Tis the smoke — don't you see? your face is too near;
I never believed a word of your vow,
And am sure that I would n't, repeated right now;
Go solace yourself with those others, my dear!
Your mistaken! *'t is* smoke in my eyes — not a tear.

. . . . . .

Do I envy the weed as I did that day!
— 'T was a year ago, and your lips were so sweet!
(Perhaps 't is the wine I 've sipped twice this glass.)
And the old days are gone! Ah, well, let them pass,
Life at best is so fleet!
You wish that your lips were this rose on my breast?
Well, *I* wish myself that — ah! guessing the rest?

. . . . . .

O your mouth is as passionate now as then!
You know in your heart that no other men —
But, you have no fear?
O! your mouth *makes* me say it: I love you so, Dear!

A Modern Romeo.

Good night, Belovéd! Still I wait,
And hold thy hand in closer clasp.
Ah, could it close the dawning gate
That turns night's warmth to morrow's cold —
That steals the secret I enfold —
That closes on the bliss I hold —
And takes such treasure from my grasp!

Good night, Belovéd! You and I
Would, lingering, say "Good night" till morn —
Would stay the hours that swiftly fly —
Would pierce morn through, and bid it die,
With passion's wingéd, barbéd dart
Because it fain would have us part —
Would take thee, Love, from off my heart —
Would separate us, you and I!

Why should we, sweet one, say, Adieu?
You say 't is wrong to question fate,
You say 't is wrong to linger late;
And yet some time, sweet one, at last,
Some time when days are overpast,
Some time kind fate will bid me stay
Till sweet night's shadows flee away,
Till sweet night passes into day!
Sweetheart, good night! 't is growing late!

Sweetheart, 't is very late; good night!
It must be that the morrow's flush
Falls on thy cheek in tint and blush!
Or is it that I whispered — hush,—
Belovéd one, just once more for rest,
Lay thy head low upon my breast:
There!—So!—The day with lesser charms
Comes soon; to-night within my arms
Whisper good night, Beloved! good night!

An Empty Cage.

I.

The morning sunshine fresh and fair,
Its luxurousness upon the air,—
The damp, faint odor of the flowers, that now anew
Lift up their sleepy faces wet with dew,
And slowly waken to the light,
And bare their bosoms to its soft caress,
— Their incensed bosoms, where low sank the night
Its weary head in grateful tenderness: —
A window open wide to all this wealth of morn, —
This beauteousness of Nature newly born;
— A little cage above the bower of sweetness swung,—
A tiny cage, about which all the sweetness clung,
And, 'mid the sweetness all its wealth of liquid music flung:
A tiny bird within the cage in days gone past,
— The days that died when all its song was cast!

II.

The cage still swings above the bower of bloom
In early morning and in evening gloom,
—In sunshine and in shadow sweet and sad, —
In shadow and in sunshine sweet and glad: —
And this was yestermorn and yesternight!
— How long the hours linger in their flight!
— How long in passing outward from our sight! —
— There is no song-bird in the cage that swings, —
No bird o'er bower and bloom its music flings, —
But soft and stilly yet the distance brings

An echo from some far-away, the faintest trill,
—The sweetest, faintest lay that heart e'er heard,—
The liquid notes like rippling water echoes still,
And somewhere, yet, methinks, there sings my bird !

III.

And so, within my heart I say :
How fair was yestermorn, — how dark to-day !
The flow'rs lift up their faces to the light
That comes when flee the shadows of the night, —
—Their faces wet with dews that fell
Within the hours whose sweetness none can tell !
Not here, but somewhere ; still the echo trills
Of liquid music that the heart soft fills,
The heart that yet with throbs of mem'ry thrills !
Not here, but somewhere ; yet the song comes back
To fill, with echo, soft and low, the weary lack
Within the soul that makes no moan :
Love's empty cage from which the bird is flown !

A Mood.

There !—let them lie where they fell,—at my feet,—
They are nothing but words, at the most, I say :—
A half of a letter, incomplete,
Written just as I felt to-day :
Written just as I *felt* ! my God ! is it true,
That, lying beneath my lightest tread,
Are the thoughts I have felt for you !

A Fragment of a Song.

"A sea-drift blown from windward back to lee!"
"——Past Hades, past Elysium, the long,
Slow, smooth, strong lapse of Lethe——."

I.

A little fragment of a song,
With tremulas that thrill and quiver,
Whose echoes, lingering late and long,
Float down a rippling river;
The song was full and clear and sweet,
The echoes linger clearer, yet, and sweeter,
As down they float, the wind-kissed waves to meet,
And in the meeting make the song completer.

II.

Thro' time and tide — thro' Love's strong light,
The melody, by rift unbroken,
Comes back again to me to-night,
And brings the words so long unspoken;—
That memory of vanished song,
With tremulas that thrill and quiver,
That filled my famished heart so long
While passsing down Time's ever-changing river!

III.

Come back, O love! and sing again
To soothe the soul e'er since by grief perturbed!

Give back to me the sweet refrain
Of song, by rift of doubt all undisturbed !

. . . . . .

Sweet songs ! that echo down the shores of Time,
When shadow after sunshine all too quickly falleth,
When life no longer flows like liquid rhyme
That mem'ry, sad and sweet, recalleth !

IV.

Pure songs,— that pulse the praise of dreams tho' unfulfilled,
That fall within the rifts of life with restful calm,—
That echo back, thro' restive years unstilled,
Like the lowly chanting,— far away,— of some sweet psalm !

A Sonnet.

I see thy loved face, lit by Memory's beams,—
Whose loving, hallowed light seems never dying,—
In softened tenderness, as in a dream,
I hear thy whispering.in breezes sighing!
In all the fancy's wanderings o'er the past,—
It, guided on by Love's bright starlight shining,
Returns to thy belovéd name at last,
With dreams that yet were true, tho' undefining;
And should my future lead in ways more golden
Than e'er the past has shown — still fairer to me
There lies within my heart, tho' ne'er unfolden,
Something to lead me on; — a memory of thee!
Thou long hast been — e'er shall be — a guiding star
Through life's long night to fair eternity.

Amouress.

"Warmed with faint fires — Sweetened with dead flowers — Measured by low music."

Sweet, never o'er Lethean stream, thro' its mists, in the night,
Shall thy sleep-sealéd eyes look away t'ward the dark, and hide
from my soul their light!
Never visions of dreams,— faces that plead,— voices that call,
Lure thy soul to the shadowless land, leaving love that were
dearer than all!
Sweet, the kisses of Death on thy lips were colder than mine,
Yea, my lips, that have poured out their passionate blisses like
wine!
Let thine eyes on my face rest their light, as the stars on the
waters they kiss,
O, mine own, is Death's countenance fairer,— more blessed to
thee, than is this?
Lilies that rise by the palms,— white as ivory,— thornless as
peace,—
Rising out of the grayness of ashes, as life out of death,— out of
turmoil surcease:—
White and cold; yea, and dearth of sweet warmth as smile of the
moon upon snow,
For such yieldest the roses,— red as drops from the heart that
loveth thee so?
Sweet, to thee once,— sweeter than these,— more sweet than were
rest,
Whiter and warmer and softer the bosom thou'st loved,— which
to-night, were the best?
Nay, sleep not! Awaken! for love is so far from content!

Slumber were thine ; O, my loved one, when night were far spent !

. . . . . .

Nay, sleep if thou wilt, e'en now,— on my breast, Sweet, thy cheek :

Nay, hush perfect lips ! on my own laid, they need not to speak !

. . . . . .

Mindless of passion that burned, of love that has lived, ev'n of life that dies,

Senseless of strength,— bereft of it,— deaf to all sound,— here, in the light of thine eyes,

Back to my soul, Sweet, is surging and ebbing the vow that I swore,

And the love that defied, face to face, Death, defies him no more !

My soul clings to thine,— God never takes back what He gave,—

And love were not love, if were laid down its vows at the grave !

Sweet, the kisses thou'st set on my lips were sweeter than sacrament wine,

And the roses I laid on thy heart were red as the blood-drops from mine !

Blossoms, thornful and passionate,— rich as the heat of the sun,

Fruits, sweet and voluptuous,— warm as the life thou hast won !

. . . . . .

Nay, then, to sleep, Sweet, sink in my bosom thy face,

My soul goeth out with thine own, Love, death-faint with thy sweets of embrace !

. . . . . .

Lilies, that rise by the palms,— white as ivory,— thornless as peace,

Rising out of the grayness of ashes,— life out of death,— out of turmoil, surcease.

A Woman's Gift.

What gift can I, from out the heartfelt treasures
Of wordless gifts the tongue cannot express,
Sweet, offer thee, within the stinted measures
Of rhythmic rules that seem so meaningless?

A word! when all the language lips have ever spoken
Is powerless, dear, to e'en express a thought!
A sigh! when but the hush of God's eternal years betoken
The endless love with which my soul is fraught!

What deed may I, in human thought conceiving,
Assume, in hope of ever carrying through,
That finally shall prove to thine own unbelieving,
The grander will of what I *want* to do?

A note snatched up in haste from out the sweeter singing
Of harp and lute that have no broken string,
A branch of olive, that the dove of peace were bringing—
The only bird in all life's storms that bears no broken wing.

A prayer to pray, upon life's altar-stairway sloping,
A chant, that pleaseth best my woman's heart to say—
A prayer embodying all that faith can mean in hoping
That God will hear, and answer, too, some day.

These things are all: "It is no wealth of giving,"
The world, in heartless fashion I can hear acclaim,
And yet, all noblest things that make life worth the living,
I offer thee each time I breathe thy name.

These things are all; but, when this life is ended,
And God has given thy heart the power to see,
Thou 'lt know the truest thing His love has lended,
Was just the human love I gave to thee.

A Fortiori.

"I lift my heavy heart up solemnly;
As once Electra her sepulchral urn,
And, looking in thine eyes, I over turn
The ashes at thy feet."

——"How the red wild sparkles dimly burn
Thro' the ashen grayness!"

I.

If thou shouldst die, before the glimmering dawn
The darkness would not flee as erst-time it had done,
When bright the worlds afar beyond our spheric morn
Withdrew their lights before the natural sun;—
Methinks the Night, with sable robes a-trail,
Upon the edges, dark, of sensuous day, would stand
Where Sorrow's chast'ning hand uplifts the veil
That falls before the portals of the unknown Land,—
Where angel voices, from the heavenly height,
Break through the rolling clouds with music Infinite.

II.

But through the portals of my life could break,
— From out such dread apocalypse control,—
No sound of answ'ring sweetness, Dear, to wake
To light the groping darkness of my sorrowing soul!
For, where the Night would wait, and, one by one,
Would mourn her lights struck outward to new day,
My soul would wait apart, in sackcloth spun,
And grieve but for the light that 'neath thine eyelids lay!

Ambition.

If time would haste its pace, we' ve said,—
The years pass swifter in the flight—
—When faintly o'er the childish head
Had worldly wisdom shed her light:—
So long to serve in life's stern school,
Its lengthened, needsome task to learn,
E'er that beneath its strictest rule,
We fairly may its honors earn!
And, as we cannot be content
With plodding in the common way,
To best improve the moments lent,
Our fair ideals turn to clay!
Like children grieving o'er some task,
We reach impatient hands to gain
What we may only sometime ask
As Heaven's reward for earthsome pain!—
Oh, time! we fain would bid thee stay
Thy progress in the years' swift flight!
For we would gather day by day,
Aught of the harvest, e'er life's night!
We would Heaven's light before us beamed
To fix the goal that must be won,—
And prove the paths we 've trod, that seemed
But rough,—the ways of glory, when we 've done.

Abide with Us!

INVOCATION.

Abide with us when morning beams
  Her radiance from the skies,—
Abide with us when evening gleam
  With light from Paradise!

Abide with us! Where'er we tread,—
  Whatever paths among,
Let Trust's calm, earnest prayer be said,
  And Faith's sweet song be sung.

Abide with us,—who go, who stay,—
  —The lilies of Thy grace
Let fall across the untried way,
  And the sunshine of Thy face!

Sherry.

"Tu Mi Chamas."

I.

Here 's to your health in sunlit wine,
And a lifetime brief but merry,—
I tip you a kiss from this glass of mine
And pledge young Love in Sherry!

II.

You may sing the praise of your rare old Port,
And your "Extra Dry," my Honey,
But the cup I lift is the gods' own gift
And can 't be bought for money!

III.

They may chant of the "crystal" sparkling, bright,
And the moss-covered bucket at leisure,—
But the cup for quaffing that gladdens my sight
Is the chalice of passion and pleasure!

O, 't is so,—don't I know!
You 're in for it once you begin it!
As with wine, so with love, you 'd better go slow,
For the devil himself is in it!

VI.

Mon Cher, midst the smoke of your fragrant cigar
Yes, I 'm fond of that sort of thing — very —
I touch with your glass for a "Here 's how you are!"
In this draught,— 't is the third of old *Sherry!*

v.

You may trust, mark my words, any man that you please,
(If you 're made with a heart that is human,) —
You may drink, of love's sacrament, down to the lees,
Provided, of course, you 're a woman.

vi.

You may give him the blood from your heart—yes, 't is so !
— And starve every day while you pet him,
But —— make up your mind : from the very word *Go !*
He 'll drain that heart dry if —— you 'll let him !

vii.

Then turn on his heel as he leisurely strikes
A match for "the smoke" that comes after,—
And your pleading is flattery such as he likes,—
As you mingle your tears with his laughter !

O, 't is so, don't I know !
You 're in for it, once you begin it !
As with wine — so with love, you 'd better go slow,
For the devil himself is in it !

viii.

But 't is better to "smile" than to sigh all the while
Life 's brief, and so ought to be merry —
To *live* as you go is a pretty good style —
(So, my boy, just a little more *Sherry !*)

ix.

You may tell about trusting a man out of sight —
— All that kind of thing at your pleasure,—
My ideas are more forcible, far, than polite ! —
But — a man, after all, — he 's a treasure !

O, 't is so! — don't I know!
  Yes, you 're in for it once you begin it —
As with wine,—so with love,—you can 't seem to go slow,
  —Tho' you know that the devil is in it!

x.

So here 's to the Lethe for all sorrows and sighs,
  And here 's to the night that is dying,—
I quaff to the ominous light in your eyes,—
  And the sweets on your lips that are lying!

xi.

We 'll drink to the joy, (tho' it 's partly alloy,)
  It is true, tho' it 's singular — very,—
But life, as *I* view it 's no failure, my boy,
  So long as there 's kisses and — *Sherry!*

The Songs that are Sung for Aye.

Over the hills as the sun went down,
Over the hills in the summer time,
As the sun went down in gold and gray,
Like a dream that is dreamed of a cloudless clime,
A little song-bird winged its way,—
A little bird at the close of day;—
Its pinions drooped, but its song was sweet
As ever the song of a bird could be,
And after the day with its weary heat,
The peace of the evening came to me.

A little child with a happy smile
Stood looking out from the window pane:
"Will the bird come back in a little while
And sing the pretty song again?"

After the dust and the heat of the day,
With its added cares and its labors done,
After the gathered sheaves, alway,
There is vesper-tide for the weary one!

There is always the sun with its gray and gold,
And the peace and the calm and the rest complete,
After the labors manifold,
There's ever a bird whose song is sweet.

But the tiny child with his wondering eyes,
Who waits each day for the homeward flight,
Looking up to the blue of the steadfast skies,
In the growing dusk of the coming night,

Turns back to me with his wistful smile,
As he tip-toe stands at the window pane,
"Will the bird come back in a little while
And sing his sweet song over again?"

Over again! What can I say
That the heart of a child may understand?
What can he know of the word "*alway*,"
Or what we mean by the Better Land?
Of the songs once sung that are sung for aye,
And never come back to human heart?
What can he know of the Sweet Someday,
Of life and its grander, better part?

What shall I answer thee? 'tell me, Sweet,
Who have just come down from the fair Above,
From out whose gates thy tiny feet
Have wandered here to prove God's love!

Shall I answer softly: "Dear, one day,
When the birds come back from the Southern clime,—
—That one will come?"—perhaps he may,
"Perhaps," I whisper, "Dear, Sometime."

And I say in my heart: Sometime,—Someday,—
In the summer-time beyond the Sea
In the perfect peace that is there alway
Life's silent songs will come back to me!
But I know in my heart that never again
The song of that bird in its homeward flight,—
And the little child at the window pane,
Will be to me as they were that night!

The Trinity of Time.

A woman's creed, insooth!

HUSBAND.

Strange, mystic word of woman's heart, and its most sacred dream:
The deep, rich keynote,—chiefest part, of life's sweet, holy theme—
The refuge of each hour that flies, and its redeeming glory,
That means the young world's paradise, and Eden's primal story!

BABE.

The sacred seal of human love,—
When love, too deep for speaking,
Can know none other sweeter proof,
And finds no holier seeking,—
When God's sweet pity lists the prayer,
And wills no contradiction,
But lays on human hearts this rare
And wondrous benediction.

HOME.

The purest chord of Heaven and Earth touched by our Father's fingers,
Whose harmony finds only birth where'er His presence lingers
Who proffers such libation-cup filled to the utmost brim
Of life's sweet nectar, not of gods, but such as comes from Him
To human lips; O, blessed Trinity of Time! and thought that draws us nearer
The perfectness of trust sublime, and faith that must be dearer
Because He teaches love supreme in ways of wondrous sweetness,
And grants this earthly life to share so much of Heaven's completeness!

Summer's Going!

"Summer's going!" woodlands cry,
Blossoms, brooks and birds reply:
"Summer's going,—going fast,
"Happy days too sweet to last!"—
Joyous birds among the flow'rs,
Are ye treasuring up the hours?
Do ye watch the ling'ring light
Of days so swiftly taking flight?

Summer's going! Like the theme
Of a broken, happy dream,
—Like the mist before the rain,
Like the shadow of a pain,
Dawns this knowledge of the heart:
Joys come, but soon depart.
Is this the comfort that ye bring,
Birds, that in the twilight sing?

Ah! bending skies that rarest smile,
Folding blossoms wait awhile!
Brooks to rippling brooks that call,
Tell me how the moments fall?
"This that human hearts must know:
Joys come, e'en though they go;
Lights and shadows tho' there be,
Light will bid the shadows flee."

Sing, Smile, Sleep.

A NOCTURNE.

I.

My belovéd, sing to-night! For in thy voice there lies
The pathos of a whole world's cry for its lost paradise!
I know not whence the wondrous pow'r of chords thy soul within,
I only know that when it breathes earth seems so free from sin!

II.

Belovéd, smile just as of old,— 'Tis strange that more to-night
Thy face amid the shadows' fall seems like a fadeless light!
I dare not question this I feel, I dare not if I would,—
The strange, sweet truth, that in thy smile is power to make me good!

III.

Belovéd, sleep! 'tis well for thee, this peaceful, dreamless rest,
I send my spirit out to-night upon its ceaseless quest,—
I think upon this sudden hush,— if this were death's deep sleep!—
I know the Christ, in life or death, beloved, thy soul will keep—
And if I could only place thee within His arms and know
Thou rested safely there with Him, could *my* arms let thee go?

IV.

Belovéd, earth hath much of hunger, grief, and strife, and care,
But song and smile and rest,— yes, all,— await us over there.
Yet were there naught of what we know there is to be,
To me 'twere heaven just the same if I were but with thee!
Beloved, I place my heart on thine, and both on Christ's, and cease
All thoughts save this: That round us flows His pure and perfect peace.

Before the Footlights.

I can see her now as I saw her then,—
As 't were only last night it comes back to me,
She posed like a Queen, and the faces of men
Surged up like the tide of the sea;

And she looked like a Queen, with the lights at her feet,
The light on her face surpassing them far,
With the flash of the gems on her breast, fair and sweet,
And each of her eyes like a star.

I watched her there as she swayed and sang,
Her voice an angel in heaven might own,
I heard the applause as its echoing rang,
And the viols died down to a moan,—

And the mist of lace on her bosom's rifts,
Like the foam that is cradled on billows at sea,—
As it rose and fell in two soft, white drifts,
With a hint where its coral reefs be, —

I saw it move men with the dangerous thrill
Of a passion that stirred as no song ever could,
As the force of the tempest ungoverned by will,
Strong ships that have vainly withstood!

And the roses they flung at her feet were as red
As the flush of the passion I read in their faces,—
And the breath of the bower she stood in was sweet
As that where the serpent left death in its traces!

'T is years since that time,— I' ve seen her again
Since that night when the world flung its bravas and roses,
And the men at her feet went nearly insane,
But the world vainly looked for what scandal exposes!

I saw her last night,— no footlights before her,
And her singing? Well, that was a lullaby sweet,
And a man, with his soul in his face, bending o'er her,
And a cradle,— low-swinging, lace-draped,— at her feet.

On her bosom where drifted the softest of laces,
Like foam that is tossed by the waves of the sea,
There nestled the smallest and sweetest of faces,
With its mouth where the coral reefs be.

And her arms that o'erflowed with the clinging of roses,
When men by her smiles had reckoned their bliss,
Are clasping all sweets that a woman's life closes,
And she lifts to the giver her lips for his kiss.

Oh, life! with the sham of your vanity's glitter,
Your plaudits of praise and your laurel cast down,
There 's one sacred thing left,— one sweet 'mid the bitter,—
Wifehood and motherhood, chrism and crown!

Benedicite.

Wherefore, if anywhere, be any death;
I fain would find and fold him fast to me.

What word of mine can give to God the praise
I feel within my heart, that, in life's hidden ways
Thy presence came to mark the sweetest of its days!
A life within my life a-newly moved,
A gift I could not understand His goodness proved,
A rest that, tho' unquiet, sweetly soothed;—
A little clasping to the heart, with tender touch
Of love and passion burning overmuch,
A little heartache that must follow such!

God's blessing, darling, wheresoe'er thou art,
Rest down upon thee, keep thee pure in heart,
— In image of Himself, from stain of sin apart!
And yet again, God bless thee! Go,
Remembering, as He knows, I love thee so!

"Christ on Calvary."

MUNKACSY'S PAINTING.

Deep calms of space, where Time's all-restless sea
Doth beat its waves upon a soundless shore,
Where thought and deed, and conscience ever more
Cease all contention and debates that be,—
Where pride gives place to sweet humility,
And knowledge proves pure Faith's largess in store,
Where brooding night yields way to day, as trust to dread,
And human nature stands unveiled where angels dare not tread.

. . . . . .

"And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst."

Oh, whence the deluge-darkness in such space,
That thrills the world with wonder's mystic grace,
Where common Silence large-dilates
Her grand proportions to such vast estates,
To fill with ashen grayness earth's bare vacant room
Where Grief, with muffled step slow treads the gloom!

. . . . . .

Ecce Homo!

Hush! peace divine rests on the patient brow,
And on the holy lips: my Lord, 't is Thou!
Whose thunders roll about Thy stricken Head,—
Whose unseen Light o'erwhelms the undivine, art dead!

But not as Man, — new-born, where calm
Is undisturbed save at the unseen breath,
Where Nature, speechless at the sudden balm,
Opes wond'ring eyes upon the Life that follows death.

. . . . . .

De Profundis.

No more the weight of earth's sad turmoil makes Thy pain,
For into earthly grief and loss drops Love's sweet gain.
'Tis done ! The darkness from fair Calvary's hill
Breaks into fairer day, and still,
And softly-sweet Heav'n's music greets Earth's ear,
As past the dark the pale stars drift and disappear,
And where His feet once trod the wine-press, dropping blood,
The natural sun breaks forth and bathes the hills in hallowed flood.

The lilies lift their sacramental cups to Heaven,
Filled with His passion's wine that peace hath giv'n,
For His remembered sake who oped Sin's darksome prison,
Love tunes her sweetest music, chiming: "*Christ is Risen!*"

Longing.

It seems sometimes when the spirit of longing sweeps over me
With its low and wistful wailing, like a breath from the restless sea, —
When tired of life's endeavors, — of the ceaseless ebb and flow
Of the tide of human existence, tired of the way things go, —
And I ponder upon the brightness that makes up life's sunshine,
— On the blessings He giveth His children, — on the blessings that have been mine, —
As I think them over slowly, — the gifts of every day,
I feel that God is gracious, yet, in my heart I say:
It seems, sometimes, if He'd give me the gift I've deemed His best,
— In my hours of earnest longing, — this one of all the rest, —
That, if He could not trust me in my weakness, to enfold
The one best treasure that I've prayed within my arms to hold, —
— If but for a year, — a year and a day, with the love of a whole life-time,
Till the night and the day of my human love should fade from the shores of Time, —
Till the human soul, to close with mine in the rapture of passionate bliss,
Should there be mine in the world beyond as it never could be in this! —
I say if He could not trust me so, as He looked into the heart,
And knew it could not bear it *all*, why could n't He give me *part*,

As in the arms of a pleading child a tiny babe we lay
For the child to hold, a moment, brief, in her own, sweet childish way, —
While underneath we place our own, and the child looks up to smile,
Because she thinks *she* holds the babe, — and *we* hold it all the while; —
If only this, — if only so within my arms He'd place
The sweetest thing a woman can know, except the gift of His grace, —
But I wonder if I could be content with a year of happiness,
If I could smile up into God's face, and know the gift was His? —
If underneath my own His arms would fold in tender care,
And I could feel His presence and His wondrous peace was there? —
And I wonder if I could give back again, and be content to give,
If I could live for a year and a day the life I have longed to live?
For, ah me! the soul to close with mine in the passionate rapture of bliss,
Can never be mine in the world beyond, as it *might* be here in this!

Life's Nine O'Clock.

The morning sunshine, fresh and fair,—
The morning-sweetness in the air,—
The morn without one shade of care,

The shifting sunlight thro' the trees,—
—The wand'ring breath of summer breeze
Intoxicated with the lees
Of draughts dipped from the amber seas:—

A hint of primal sweets forbidden,
A sweet suggestion that is hidden
In folded buds, like dreams of Eden;

—The fuller tide of mid-day hour,—
The opening bud that 's turned to flower,
—The valley-depths, and mounts that tower:

Out upon the summer-grass,
O'er which the changeful sunbeams pass,
Sleeps sweetly noon-tide hours away
A little child grown tired of play:

Within the tiny fingers prest—
A little withered flower;—the best
Of all his toys cast by for rest:
—One little flow'r clasped to his breast.

Around the lips, that, ' while before
Sang childish songs, now hushed and o'er,
Cling drops of childhood's mandragore.

What joy within those dreams thou hast!
— No clouds thy sky to overcast, —
No darkness when the day is past: —

And so thou wak'st and sleep'st again;
No thoughts that vex the minds of men
Disturb the peace of childhood's ken.

. . . . . .

And so he sleeps thro' morning hours —
'Midst song of birds and scent of flowers,
— Whose sky above forebodes no showers: —

The hours pass: The closing day
In length'ning shadows melt away
In gold and amethyst and gray, —

And, as the shadows slowly close
'Round nesting bird and shutting rose,
A little child led, homeward, goes: —

The clinging fingers lightly press
The withered flower with soft caress,
— Plucked in the morning's happiness.

No other toy his hands enfold,
— The playthings he was wont to hold
E'er that the day had grown so old.

A little, weary child, at best,
Led homeward for his needed rest,
Unconscious, proving Nature's test.

A little kneeling at the knee, —
— A little pray'r said sleepily,
Outdoing man's philosophy.

And, after, — slumber that doth mock,
The morning's dreams, — the wrinkled frock, —
The well-worn shoes, — the tiny sock
Laid by at evening's Nine O'Clock.

And this is all; and men at will
Philosophize and argue still
With creeds they understand but ill,

With what results? What peace of mind
— What depth of comfort can ye find
In judgments of a human kind,

O, men, whose idols prove but dust,
Because of creeds that hold no trust,
Whose light 's extinguished by a gust
Of understandings wrong, that bear
Upon a life that 's filled with care,
And lightened by no heartfelt prayer?

Ye cannot know what mothers learn, —
Ye would not such sweet lessons spurn
As mothers' cares and labors earn!

. . . . . .

Beneath the summer's waving grass,
O'er which the changing breezes pass —
Earth's child, grown tired of life's long day,
Sleeps peacefully and sleeps alway: —

Within the folded fingers pressed
A withered flower, — earth-plucked, — the best
Of all her gifts cast by for rest:
— A withered flow' r laid on the breast.

For God, thro' Nature's self, has planned,
In breathings from the Better-land,
The faith a child may understand !

And sweet the lips, that, while before,
Sang earth-time songs, — now hushed and o'er, —
Are bathed in Nature's mandragore.

And this such slumber as doth mock
Life's morning dreams : — the hushéd talk
And resting at life's Nine O'Clock.

Love's Deep, Deep Sleep.

No need of weak lamenting any more,—
No need of vain repenting; it is o'er!
Or false or true, Love lieth dead and white
With damp regretful blossoms of the night,
That fain do weep and silent, tearful, grieve,
Because that Love hath ta'en his leave,
Because that Love hath died because of you
Whom he found false, alas! but thought so true,
Upon the heart and on the stilléd breast,
That's changed a sweet, tumultuous life for rest.

Wake not his lute, that has one broken string,
No more the chords, without one missing note, Love used to sing
Shall touch to life the old, rare bliss that's crushed,
Shall breathe again the old, sweet song that's hushed!
So Love lies dead, and you and I are left;
His tranquil, dreamless sleep leaves us bereft;
Our souls still linger by the grave we've made to-night—
The grave where Love lies lowly out of sight,
The grave that holds whate'er we've known of sweet delight.
But, since we mourn together, you and I,
Since we have learned how sad a thing it is for Love to die,
Let's comfort each the other, darling, in our grief,
And in life's sweetest creed fix our belief:
That just because of sacred faith our hearts have kept,
Sweet love has never died, but only slept!

Easter.

Adagio.

Here lies the world :
The scarlet tulips of her carnival, half crushed and wilted, fall
And burn their passion-fires against the velvet blackness of the
Lenten pall
That covers her, and throws in clear relief her still voluptuous
pose, —
The cynic smile upon the upturned face and eyes that close
But half upon the scornful light that in them gleamed ; —
And we stand here beside her, wond'ring if that she seemed,
She was, — and warm and sweet,
From crimson-parted lips to perfect feet,
That stood in waiting on the shores of Time,
There drifted to our hearts the music of her rhyme, —
And on our thirsting lips her kisses fell, and on the brow
Her gracious touch like wine that steals along the veins, but now
The Lethean dreams to dreamless sleep do turn :
The scarlet fires against the darksome pall still burn
Like vestal torches twinkling in the dark of earth's confine ;
So lies the world !

. . . . . .

Allegro.

The night is past : from gone-out fires
The incense rises unto day !
There *is* no death ; the soul's desires
Find wings and leave the clay :

Up from the ashes of earth's flame
The lilies rise to meet the Light,
And, from the garments of her fame,
The world mounts to His sight.

"I am the resurrection,"—lift each cup,
Oh, lilies, cool and dim;
Break forth in songs, and bear them up,
Oh, birds, in praise of Him!
There is no sadness,—all the dark
Has melted into endless day,
And, bathed in wondrous floods of light,
Sin dies for aye.

Break forth, oh, soul, in songs of praise!
Shine forth from out thy prison,
For, lo! the night is passed away,
And Christ is risen!

Aspic Leaves.

" . . . and die where thou hast lived;
Quicken with kissing had my lips that power,
Thus would I wear them out."

" . . . the aspic leaves
Upon the caves of Nile."

I.

You swore by your life that you loved me,
Last night as you lay on on my breast,
You said you would die, if it need be,
For an hour of such rapturous unrest—
Would die as the soul dies in sinning,
To whom all eternity's lost,—
And you swore that you thought that such winning
Were worthy such infinite cost!
You vowed that a deathless passion,
As fierce as the fires of hell—
As true as the heights of heaven,
And eternity, as well,
Possessed your very being
With a strength surpassing each,
And you taught me the sweetest lesson
That a man knows how to teach!

II.

You woke all the soul that God gave me
Into a new, strange birth,
And you seemed, in your splendid manhood,
Beyond all the men of this earth,—
You were a god in the mystery
Of love that no words can e'er name,
Yet you were a man in the wonder

And strength of that passion I claim—
And I held you close in the silence,
Unbroke, save by shudder and sigh,
Till, drunk with the lees of love's wine-draught,
I prayed in my anguish to die,—
To die in the exquisite torture
Of your clasp and your kiss and embrace,
To die!—and to-night I am starving
To look just once more in your face!

III.

For, last night 'though the chalice were emptied,
I could drain it again to the lees,
—'Though the cup were the dome of the heavens,
And its wine as the tempest-tossed seas!
Ah, me! I would die if it need be,
For one hour of delicious unrest,
To-night, if your lips in their burning,
On my passion-laid bosom were prest!
Would die as the soul dies in sinning,
To whom all eternity's lost,
For oh, to my heart, your love's winning,
Is worthy an infinite cost!
And a sense of your own deathless passion,
As fierce as the fires of hell;
As true as the heights of heaven,
And eternity, as well,
Fills full my very being,
With its strength surpassing each,
Since you taught me the sweet, strange lesson
That a man like you, only, could teach!

Fair was the Rose!

Fair was the rose he gave me,
— Fair and blushing red; —
— Wet with the dews of evening, —
And sweet were the words he said.
A-done is the Summer's passing,—
The rose-leaves scattered lie,—
His love was like the Summer
That swiftly passéd by!
Alas! and alack for beauty,
Alack! and alas for love!
For one is a dream that flitteth,
And one hath the wings of a dove!

Hesitation.

I turn me where the setting sun
With parting glory floods the earth,
And muse, half-sad, on tasks undone,
Half-glad to prove some hidden worth
And wealth of life's significance:
The daily joy communing with the pain,—
And seek to find, in one day's wistful glance,
The consciousness of lesser loss than gain.

As one who pauses when the way
Slopes doubtful t'ward the fitful light
That falls, from out the bars of day,
Across the starless pall of night;—
Scarce daring trust the transient gleam,
Or e'en the paths, that, 'chance may lead
Thro' coverts dang'rous or thro' sullen stream,
Instead by shore and fragrant mead;
Emerging cautiously and slow—
Not all in dread, not quite in fear,
Of whate'er lurking, deadly foe
That lies within an ambush near,
Because of armor girded on,
—Of nerve that will not fail in hour of need,—
Yet, pausing where the journey's but begun,
With feet, that, faltering on the threshold, bleed.

Oh, heart and soul! immortal birth,
Grown sick with bearing overmuch,
Of standing face to face with earth,
And earth's stern laws! One gentler touch
Of kindly hand upon the weight
Of what years bring when years are old,
Doth prove at last — almost too late —
That warmth can glow midst chill and cold.
Oh, Love! draw near and closer still,
And hold my hand in closer clasp!
Too weak to meet the stronger will
And hold such treasure within grasp:
The reaching after higher light
That burns with stern Ambition's flame;
Too soon the shadows come to-night,
To-morrow 'twill be just the same!

Dear Love, thou 'rt strong and I am weak,
And I am frail while thou art strong!
Sweet Love, I fain, with cheek on cheek,
Would have thee clasp me close and long,
To-morrow comes! and all too soon
The night's sweet shades will pass to day,
Our paths may verge so strangely wide,
And thou may'st be so far away!
So, sweetly stealing all the balm
From wounds that may be thine and mine,
Let's fall asleep within the calm
Of life's sweet opiate, love's old wine.

Hushed is Auburn's Sacred Lyre!

Commencement Hymn — Lasell Seminary.

[WRITTEN BY REQUEST.]

I.

All hushed is Auburn's sacred lyre
That hangs in memory's hall,
Whose closing strains to-day expire
And in our bosoms fall;

II.

Fair humid dale! Whose echoed note
Of music rarely-sweet, —
And hills that catch the strain afloat
And make the song complete,

III.

Than which no chord of life shall rise,
O'er waiting hearts to brood,
More full of meaning from the skies
Of dawning womanhood!

IV.

Call down, in Nature's silent prayer —
Of peace and purity
Our Father's ever-watchful care,
His love's security: —

v.

Sweet Spirit, hear! With us abide
From morn till shadows fall,
O, Thou, more fair than all beside,
To whom our spirits call,

vi.

Abide with us! — who go — who stay,
The lilies of Thy grace
Let fall across the untried way,
— The sunshine of Thy face!

That Night at the Play.

"Till death have broken."

I.

I 've lived it over day and night,
And night and day, for years, — yes, more ! —
I remember it all, from the orchestra's clash,
From the faint sweet scent and the footlights' flash,
To the flow'rs I wore !
I watched your face in the shadow there,
As the curtain rose and the lights went low,
And I lifted to God, from my heart, a prayer
That before it was over you 'd know and would care —
That you 'd understand, — that 't would come to you there,
Before we were ready to go, —
How, out of the breath of the flow'rs that breathed,
That you 'd given me there — did you understand?
The love was born and the passion spoke,
And all that there was of my being awoke
At the very first touch of your hand !

II.

And I lived as a person lives in a dream, —
I heard the lines, and I watched them play;
I saw each swell of their bosoms fair,
And the lights play through the gold of their hair, —

I followed the mould of each beautiful limb, —
The lights were low and the outlines dim, —
And my heart kept time to the music's beat,
And my pulse to the tinkle of sandaled feet,
And I was alive to the music's throb,
The bassoon's thunder, the viols' sob,
And the xylophone's ring, —
And the blood surged up from my heart in a tide, —
I could feel your touch on my hand still cling,
I watched your face as you sat at my side,
I saw only that thro' the whole of the theme, —
And I knew only that as I lived in a dream, —
I knew 't was the face of my king !

III.

And had you but turned, e'er the hour had died,
And spoken the words that I thirsted to hear,
I 'd have given up all of the world beside, —
And had for the future no fear.
Had you asked me then to have left behind
Whatever there was, or had been, of my life,
I 'd have given it all up — sealed and signed, —
To have been, that night, your wife !

IV.

And never before had I known that you lived, —
Had seen your face or heard your voice, —
But your hand clasped mine, in the dim light there,
And my soul made its sacred choice !

And I knew that forever, for earth and Heaven,
My body and soul were a part of your own —
And my heart kept time to the music's beat,
And my pulse to the twinkle of sandaled feet
As the viols died down to a moan.

v.

The years lay wide, since that night's sweet dream,
With their fever-thirst and hunger of heart,
Only minor chords have filled the theme
Of the time we have been apart, —
But the past is dead with its weary pain
Of waiting and hungering, struggle and care, —
And God never sends to us loss without gain,
And He knew just how much we could bear.
Perhaps, if from the first, when our hands met and clasped,
And our hearts, without language of speech, took their vow,
There nothing had been to have kept us apart,
Our peace were less blesséd than now! —
For the hearts that have suffered are truest, they say,
And, I think, are more tender when pain leaves its trace;
And the answer to whether God hears when we pray
Is mine as I look on your face!

Dead-Sea Fruit.

"——Of things unspeakable spoken,
"——Of tears unendurable shed."

I.

All night long the light breeze lifts the laces at the lattice,—
The south-wind, soft and sensuous,—half-asleep,
—The dusk within the chamber, such as that is
When th' heavens forget their vestal lamps to keep
A-burn, and soft and fragrant as the ashes
Of roses perished in their crimson flame,
And tender as the tear upon Love's lashes,—
And full of passion as the whisper of your name!
The calling of the nightingale, that brings upon each note,
The faint, sweet breath of lilies, slumber-swayed,—
—The shadows shifting on the marble of your throat,
And the curving of your bosom where my lips were laid!
The silence broken only by your raptured sighs,
—The dark unbroke but by the light that gleamed
Between the dusky lashes of your half-shut eyes,
The while you lay in sweet abandon there and dreamed:
And on my breast your darksome cloud of tresses
Lay like the night upon tumultuous seas,—
And dim, faint outlines that desire half-guesses,
Set brain and pulse a-war, like wine at lees!

II.

Oh, lips! With your scarlet temptations,
Your soft laugh, full of languor and lust,

And of sleep, — as the somnolent poppies
That spill their red blood in the dust,
Was there ever a man in the whole world wide,
Of all the men who have knelt at your feet,
Would have died for your sake as I would have died,
Had it made your happiness more complete,
Would have given his life for your own, to drink,
The blood from his heart for your favor's sake, —
Would have given his flesh for your love, do you think,
To have spared your heart one ache?
Yet, when hope was highest, and blossom to fruit
Was granted to life for its golden dower,
I'd have given it all — and that life to boot,
To have owned you *mine* for one hour?
My own, — with the knowledge of all your past,
— With all dead loves as a memory, merely,
As you lay that night in my arms held fast,
And the love in my soul that I gave sincerely!

III.

But the love that comes in the life of a man
Is sad and swift as the tides of the sea,
And a woman loves as best she can, —
Is as true as —— a woman *can* be!
It is only a little a man can save
From the shipwreck of trust on the sands of time, —
— A flower, perchance, to lay in his grave, —
— A tress of hair — or a rhyme; —

IV.

There are worse things come to a man than death,
For death is a triumph, whatever the cost,

But, for what he would give his final breath,
Drifts out of his reach and is lost!
And he sleeps — and the tides go out with the ships, —
Times change, and the winds that veer in the tides,
But the moan that lives in the prayer on his lips —
— That *never* subsides!
From the wreck of hope and the ruin of trust,
And the echo of passionate pain and strife,
And the things man suffers because he must,
— In th' unequal battle of life, —
— From the sounds of delight when the heart is on fire,
— In the bliss that rebels and the pain it discloses, —
And the pitiful pulse of its own desire
In the surcease sleeps, and in peace reposes.

V.

But to-night the fire on my brain, like wine,
Till spirit and flesh seem molten asunder,
Goes back to that night, when, your lips on mine,
In the war of passion and pulse of wonder,
I lay and slaked the thirst of my heart,
Love's lotos and lethe on my soul like dew,
And dreamed of our lives to be never apart,
(And I staked that soul on you!)
And there comes again the late lark's note,
And the scent of the lilies — slumber-swayed,
And I see the shadows shift on your throat,
And your breast where my lips were laid!
And, O God! for the sleep in the shadow of space —
For the Lethean waters o' er time that has been!
When the heart is dead to the sight of a face,

And the soul to the hurt of a sin!
Could I have, once more, my life complete—
All the years I have giv' n and life let go,—
All the bitter of grief and the little of sweet,
And the dreams and the hopes laid low,—
I' d give it all for that hour of peace,
Before my faith in mankind was broken,
Or, if death had but given my soul release
Ere a curse, in place of a prayer, was spoken!

VI.

But the dead sea fruit in the waves that hiss
With their purple and gold of buried plunder,
And a lustful laugh, and a man's pure kiss,
Time's ebbing tides lie under!
And the prayer moans on, and the curse is dead,
And both are still, in eternity sleeping—
And the lips that lied in the vows they said,
And the soul that sinned, are in God's own keeping!

. . . . . .

From the sounds of delight when the heart was on fire,
In the bliss that rebels and the pain it discloses,
And the pitiful pulse of its own desire
In the surcease sleeps and in peace reposes.

Despair.

Who says Despair goes forth as woman in her grief,
With hands clasped in such frenzy seemeth must not be, —
— With eyes still capable of tears, and wild with late regret,
— With heart a-flame, but that cannot forget,
But burneth on and on, forever with the past,
And feeds upon the ache that must make moan or die,
But, aching, cannot die, tho' moan be turned to prayer: —
— Who sayeth this, forsooth, can be Despair?
I tell ye such she never was! I 've looked on her!
Most like a statue wrought in marble, white and cold,
And void of supplication as th' Egyptian Sphynx,
In everlasting watch and wo; —
The marble eyelids never droop in sleep,
And never tears do moist the stony gaze
Whence hope hath quenched its light forevermore: —
— That looks upon the smile of day and sees but night,
Nor knoweth when that suns do rise and set,
And knows not hours from centuries that pass; —
And so doth time t' eternity move on,
And so the heart that erst did throb with God's own warmth,
— Before that Sorrow laid her touch thereon,
— Turned into marble — cold as dead hearts be,
— Yea, colder than these e'er become, —
Still keepeth watch and ward thro' time that seems eternity,
Nor knoweth Desolation's surcease, while the heavens are dumb.

Extract.

. . . . . .

The broadest field of action
Is not in the outward marts,
All the sweetest of life's living
Lies within our human hearts.

. . . . . .

Ecce Homo!

Oh, lips in anguish parted!
  Oh, bleeding brow, thorn-crowned!
Oh, Christ! thou tender-hearted,
  In whom all life is found,—
Our hearts no creeds are seeking,
  The mind no question knows,
Thy patient eyes are speaking,
  — Thy life-blood, crimson, flows!
Thy piercéd palms outstretchéd,
  Our burdens safely hold,—
And us, tho' poor and wretched,
  Thy gentle arms enfold!
Upon Thy grace supernal
  Our weight of grief is prest,
And in Thy love eternal
  Our souls shall sweetly rest.

Cum Spiritu Tuo.

Upon the western sky another twilight smiled,
And in the shades of ev'n its tears would hide,
The smiles for some sweet deed that day-long care beguiled,
—Its tears for golden opportunities defied: —
And so another day had passed beyond
Our feeble grasp and heart-desire,
Leaving the soul to feel how slight the bond
That held it to the sacrificial fire!
We would not justify ourselves by search of creed,
Nor fain would prove our purest intents right,
When every day doth but reveal to us our need,
And prove us what we are, at best, within His sight!
. . . The days Thy seal hath closed are Thine alone,
We may not view the unknown Land
That lies before, but ask of Thee this boon
Of faith: that we may, trusting, only clasp Thy hand!

A Sigh.

If you were mine and I held you safe
From the danger of others' embrace—
If I only could know that no eyes but mine
Would look on your passionful face,
—If a thousand years were as one day,
With Time in his mystical flight,
I would that that day were ended here
In the exquisite bliss of to-night!

. . . . . .

What Belongeth, Soul, to Thee?

I.

What belongeth, soul, to thee?
A breath of Spring's sweet melody, —
A dream of other Springs that yet may be, —
A flutter of the wing of happy bird, —
The mem'ry of some cherished, loving word, —
Some thought of Life's sweet story thou 'st heard, —
A gleam of sunset sky that burneth bright,
That seems a glimpse of heaven's own, wondrous light, —
— Like dream of thine that fades when cometh night; —
— Labor in the field thro' noontide sun, — the sheaves
Thou 'st gathered, and eve's pure, cool lily-leaves
Filled with the dews of blessings life receives, —
— The blush of morning, and the evening's breath, —
— A wakening unto earthly life, then —— Death!
Is this, then, all th' immortal spirit hath?

II.

What belongeth, soul, to thee?
The spring of resurrected life, — The melody
Of praise, and songs thou 'st heard
While wand'ring down the mystic vales of life,
Sweet songs! without one pulse of strife,
Pure songs! with throbs of everlasting praise, and rife
With tremulas of bliss unknown, —
Fair strains, whose echoes thou 'st heard,

— The sweetness of thine earth-time dreams to fullness grown !
— The gathered sheaves of harvest ; — and the lily-leaves
That hover o'er and breathe their cool, pure breath,
In likeness of the one fair Lily of the Valley — Death,
That breathes upon the sheaves of Heaven's redeeméd
ones His breath ; —
— The hush of even-calm, when earth-time labor's past, —
And the brightness of the eternal morn, at last !

With Sunshine Warm and Tender.

The day had just begun to wake,
  The dew-drops lingered on the flowers,
She wandered down the garden path,
  And thro' the trembling covert bowers;—
The dawn was fair with roseate hue,
  More fair her cheeks' sweet blushes,
The birds burst forth in song anew,
  Her voice was sweeter than the thrushes.

She stood beside the laughing brook,
  That morning in the month of June,
And life was like some rhyme that took
  A new and strangely perfect tune.
She gathered roses by the way,
  Bright with the morning's splendor;
Her heart was like the opening day,
  With love-light warm and tender.

. . . . . .

He met her where the waters smiled,
  That morn in month of roses,—
And love the long fair hours beguiled,
  And she arranged her posies.

And, though as fell the dews at last,
The rose leaves 'round lay scattered,
And tho' the morning long had passed,
To them it little mattered.

. . . . . .

The day had just begun to close,
The dew-drops fell upon the flowers,
Two wandered down the garden path
Where one had passed its covered bowers;—
They walked home by the longest way,
Thro' twilight's softened splendor,
Their hearts were like the golden day,—
With love-light warm and tender.

Love's Logic.

I.

You knew it when first I met you,
And so foresaw the end, —
Why couldn't you have kept your secret
And still have been my friend,
Enjoying the time that was passing,
With never a thought of more
Than a Platonic friendship,
Like others you 've had before?
Why need there have been any danger,
— As we talked with ethical sense, —
On subjects of art and science,
Of a feeling more intense,
— That has grown, you say, into passion,
As it never ought to have grown
From the subjects we deftly touched on
While we walked there alone!
— Walked, as we ought not to
Have done, in the dusk and the dew, —
I know, — but 'twas pleasant talking
With a friend, when that friend was you!
But I tried from my heart sincerely
As ever a woman can,
To prove a consistent friendship,
Although that friend be a man!

II.

And you knew of my promise plighted,
— And I knew of your promised bride, —
And still I walked in the garden,
And still you walked at my side; —
But I thought that I had conquered,
When I tried to keep from sight
The love that had grown into longing,
And, vainly, I strived to do right!
And now you have told me your story, —
And I 've told you mine! — Is it fate
That has matched our mistakes in the plighting
With others before 'twas too late?
So here, in the dusk of the twilight,
— In the dusk, with the roses and dew,
I have learned the sweet lesson of loving,
And you say, Dear, I 've taught it to you?
Yet I tried from my heart sincerely,
— As ever a woman can,
To prove a consistent friendship,
Although that friend be a man,
But what friendship is sweeter than love is —
— If the logic but govern the life?
And what friend is more true than a woman,
When the woman and friend is — your wife?

Motherhood.

A blossom blown against her bosom's drifted snow,
A wee-bit bud of velvet whiteness cast below,
From out Heaven's height, to teach her how to go,

— To mark the way, thro' depths of sweetest pain,
To where God's flowers unfold their leaves that have no stain.

A little prayer, and song of psalm beside —
A little chanting at day's eventide,
When Heaven's gracious gates are open wide :

A little rift of music sung below, —
A little note of pleading breathed so low
That God could hear, what human heart could know !

A meaning far beyond all mortal ken,
A little stir and thrill beneath the heart, — and then,
To love's sweet, sacred deed God's grand Amen !

What word from praiseful lips may fall
To break such hush as over all
Falls deep when soft His voice doth call ?

She standeth now within His holy sight,
About her head a halo of the light
That breaks beyond the shade of earthly night !

Within her heart the knowledge of all good:
The dust of golden lilies where her feet have stood,—
And on her brow the crown of womanhood.

Within her hands lay life's most precious things,
Upon her lips love's praiseful song still sings,
And in her heart the dove of peace hath folded its white wings.

She hath them all,—the gifts that can be given;—
Life, love, motherhood, and God and Rest and Heaven.

My King!

I.

You are all that I have to live for—
All that I want to love,
All that the whole world holds for me
Of a faith in a world above!
You came,—and it seemed too mighty
For my human heart to hold;
It seemed, in its sacred glory,
Like a glimpse thro' the Gates of Gold;
Like life in the primal Eden
Created, formed anew—
This dream of a perfect manhood
That I realize in you!

II.

And you are mine till your Maker calls you—
Your soul and your body, Sweet!
Your breath, and the whole of your being
From your kingly head to your feet—
Your eyes, and the light that is in them,—
Your lips, with their maddening wine,—
Your arms, with their passionate clasp, my king—
Your body and soul are mine!

III.

No power whatsoever,
  No will but God's alone
Can take you from my keeping;
  You are His and mine, alone!

IV.

I know not when, if ever —
  I know not where or how
Death's hand may try the fetters
  That bind us here and now;
But Some-day, when God beckons,
  Where rise His fronded palms,
My soul shall cross the River
  And lay you in His arms:
Forever and forever
  Beyond the Silent Sea,
You will rest in the Arms Eternal
  And still belong to me!

Maybe?

"—the song of covert bird!"

I.

A late bird in the homeward flight,
With pinions drooping wearily,
Into the bosom of the night
One sweet note droppeth tenderly,
No matter howso' tired he be,
That note of sweetness droppeth he!
Dear little weary nestling, thou,
Whose wings are heavy with the shower,
Still singest as sweetly, even now,
As e'er thou didst at morning hour,
Methinks my heart, tho' tired, could sing
Its note of praise at eventide,
If evening's hour at last would bring
The rest of home,— then all beside
More sweet to lowly drooping wing
Of spirit lade with Marah's spray,
Than any other earthly thing,
When follows night upon the day!

II.

Sweet falls the dew on woodland flower,
On sleepy flower and clinging vine,
More sweetly drops, in covert bower,
That bliss-contented song of thine!

And, in my soul, dear little bird,
Thou leav'st a thought of restful peace
That nestles in the depths thou'st stirred,
To comfort when thy song shall cease;
Methinks my heart, perchance, at last,
May know the sweet content of love,
When that some days are overpast,
That will the Lord's dear pity prove;
Some night love's rest to wand'ring feet,
On waiting heart and faith's pure flowers,
As doth thy song to-night, so sweet,
Within the woodland bowers!

Love's Undisputed Proof.

No proof that you said you loved me?
How can such things be said?
We cannot prove the song of the bird
When the bird with its song is fled:
In the hush that comes when the song is done,
When the bird lies still and dead!
What proof that the summer's glory
Has come and gone again?
What proof of the olden story
In the aftermath of pain?
What proof of the summer's scarlet bloom
In the autumn chill and rain?

So, what proof of the maddening passion
That was hid from the world's cold sight?
What proof, in the world's cold fashion,
Can I offer you to-night?
What proof, when the shadows of darkness come,
That there ever has been any light?

I have given you all that my soul could give —
Have proved that I loved you so;
You have taught me all I could learn and live
And now — you are ready to go!

Why ask my heart for a proof of the past
That is dead to you and to me?

The love that was all too sweet to last
Is dead; now let it be!
It is dead, and lieth too deep in its grave
For tearless eyes to see.

But sometime, dear — sometime — some day —
When here by the side of the mound
Of life's sweetest things we have buried to-day
In life's holy and consecrate ground,
You will think, with a man's tardy tenderness then
Of the passion that perished uncrowned.

My hands are lade with the flowers
That, too, died of the warmth I gave;
And over the perished glory
That lieth in its grave,
I scatter the scarlet blossoms
That, living, I know Love would crave;
The blossoms Love calleth his asphodels,
That he lay on the hearts of his brave.

It is my proof that I deal with our dead there
As only a woman can deal,
And I add to your transient pity
What a woman's heart can feel;
The proof that her heart can be just as true
In the hours of woe as in weal.

But I cannot *prove* that I loved you —
How can such things be said?

What need to prove that the bird ever sang
When the bird and the song are fled?
In the solemn hush when the song is done,
And the bird lies still and dead.

There is no proof of love's summer, dear,
Save the aftermath of pain;
And no proof of the scarlet blossoms
That never will bloom again;
And the love I gave with all my soul
Was given, alas! in vain.

Misunderstood.

"Land me," she says, "where love
Shows but one shaft, one dove,
One heart, one hand."

I.

They called her cold and passionless: —
They did not know — they could not guess,
— Because she did not fling broadcast
Her violets in the ways she passed,
By which Love's spring might be confessed, —
And every thought within her breast!
They stood not at her altitude
Of high-born strength and fortitude, —
They could not see the lights that burned,
— The tapers weaker hearts have spurned, —
On altars high, the primal good
Of incarnated womanhood.

II.

They could not hear the fine, clear strain
That thrills the summits of great pain,
And consummates its sweetest gain:
— The mounts o'ertow'ring Life's sad sea, —
Beyond which lies its Italy. —
They held no power commensurate
With that sweet sense of such estate
As man calls cold, but God calls *great!*

III.

They called her cold: — while o'er Life's sea
Came passion's full antiphony

With Love's sweet ministering grace;—
And, through the heights and depths of space,
Rolled back the music of the spheres
In promise for the future years;
—The dear and consummating breath
Before the sunset-gates of Death.

IV.

The world, of sorrow, gives no sign
When woman's pearls are melt in wine,
But down its empty chalice dips
And lifts it to her thirsting lips!
On her are fixt expectant eyes:
—She will not taste such sacrifice—
The draught and chalice are not mete—
She flings it downward at her feet!

. . . . . .

And still the changeless planets pass,—
And still grows on the blade of grass;—
—Unslaked the lands thro' swell of tides
That flows and ebbs, but ne'er abides,—
—And hearts are as the lands:
From out God's gracious hands,
That hold Life's sacramental wine,
They wait the mystery and the sign.

V.

And dreams are thyme shut up in drawers,—
—The string that tied the last year's flowers;—
The leaf turned down to mark its rhyme,—
Its bird that's flown to other clime.

Mountains of Dust.

"Mistaking still the cherub's sword
For shining of the sun!"

I.

Sometimes, when the spirit of sadness
Hath fallen on long-cherished dreams,
Sometimes when the shadow of sorrow
Obscures faith's heavenly gleams,
When not always the paths He appointeth
Beside the still waters are ours,—
And the ways that our footsteps must follow,
Blossom not with life's choicest of flowers,—
When we stand on the mount of confliction,
In struggle with duty and right,
The heights that rise fair in the gleam of
Revelation's all-radiant light,
—The heights that are tow'ring about us
With a grandeur and glory sublime
That have stood thro' the progress of ages,
Withstanding the tempests of time,—
We, in struggle, I say, with stern duty,
—With right 'gainst the longing of heart
That yearns for the valleys beneath us
Till the tears, thro' the soul's anguish, start,
Because afar down in the valleys
There seemeth are pastures of peace,

And we think if our hearts could but reach there
All heartache and sorrow would cease,
And we lean tired souls toward the valleys,
From the slopes of the mountains of trust,—
— Till our faces are hid from the sunshine
Of God's beautiful mountains of " Must " !

II.

If we only could learn all the lessons
He fain would have human hearts learn,
— If we could but accept all the truths that
Our poor faltering judgments will spurn,
Less oft were our dissatisfaction
With what we must know is for best,
More oft were the hearts of the human
Strong in trust of God's will for the rest !
And so, when the spirit of sadness
Hath fallen on long-cherished dreams,
Whenever the shadow of sorrow
Obscureth faith's heavenly gleams, —
When not always the paths He appointeth
Beside the still waters are ours, —
And the paths that our footsteps must follow,
Blossom not with life's choicest of flowers, —
Looking not t'ward the valley's fair sunlight,
Away from the mountains of trust, —
Let us stand with glad feet on the hillsides
Sloping up to the heights of God's " Must " !

Love.

I would that Love were as a rose,
That we might pluck it at our pleasure,
Or like the ruby wine that flows,
That there need be no stinted measure; —
I would that Love were as a stream
In silvery, rippling music breaking; —
Ah, me! I would 't were as a dream,
Whose happy sleep should know no waking!

False or True.

I wonder if I could look, to-night,
Into your own self-seeming,
Could read your thoughts, and read them aright,—
Leaving all of the womanhood's dreaming,—
Could know of the false as well as the true,
And not only the joys, but the sorrows
That have truly come home to the heart in you,
With the knowledge experience borrows
From the days of the past that have lended their charm,—
From the days that have seem to make gladder
Your life in the old times,— that have lingered like balm
For the hours that were darker and sadder,—
So much I know, do I know it all,
— Making up your human existence?—
Of the hours when your Hades has bidden you call
In vain for your human resistance,—
When the woman's share,— the woman's part,—
Was pledged for the upward-lifting
From the tide of temptation bearing your heart
Afar, in an impotent drifting,
And, after it all, and I stood to-night
And looked into your inward-seeming,
And read your heart,— not by Love's mystic light,
— Leaving all of my womanhood's dreaming,—

—Would I place my hands in your hands, Dear,
And clasp them over the wide,
Deep gulf that lies between me, here,
And you on the other side?
And I wonder if you, rememb'ring the fleet,
Fair hours that died long ago,
—As you stand in Time's light that is tender and sweet,
And look over the waters that flow,—
Would you, friend of mine, reach forth your hand,
And in honesty clasp my own,
—As you wait there in a distant land,
And as I wait here alone,—
Could I trust that in all you would tell me aright,
And deal with me truly as I would,
If you stood in my place and I questioned to-night,—
—Would you answer me truly as I should?
But, alas! for the gulf that can never be crossed,—
And the winds that are over it blowing!
Alas, for the years that so sadly are lost,—
And the years that so sadly are going!
Still, I know that if I could look, to-night,—
Into your own self-seeming,—
—Could read your soul, and read it aright,
I couldn't give up the dreaming!—
But, taking the false as well the true,
—If false with the true there be,—
I could bury whatever were false in you,
In the depths of love in me!

Jesus, Lover of my Soul.

I.

Come closer, closer,—Savior mine,—
And breathe Thy soul of love
Into my weak and human heart,—
So thus Thy presence prove!
Upon Thy heart I 'd lay me down—
My restless soul of sin—
That Thou may'st speak to me, alone,
Where none can enter in

II.

To mock the pangs of weary pain,
And voice of ceaseless ill,
That naught of earth hath power to heal,
And nothing earthly still!
Breathe softly, Christ, Thy tones of love
To my o'er burdened heart,
And, through Thy tender, pitying eyes,
Thy righteousness impart!
Drink in my human weaknesses
With that deep look of Thine,—
And give, instead, Thy holiness,—
Thy grace, and truth divine!

III.

And place more near Thy face to mine,—
More near the thorn-crowned brow,—
Take in Thy precious, piercéd palm
My hands, and whisper low,—

O, Jesus, Lover of my Soul,
Thy passion marvellous,—
The blood Thou 'st shed in agony,
And that redeemeth us!

IV.

Thy tears I'd feel upon my head,—
Upon my brow and cheek,—
My love for Thee is measureless,
The love no tongue can speak: —
So lay me sweetly on Thy breast
That I yet more may feel
Thy heart-throbs 'neath my own,—Thy life
That shall my soul full fill!

V.

So near Thou art, O Life, divine, —
So near am I to Thee,
That, calm, my raptured soul looks out
Upon Eternity,
And feareth naught in life or death,
For Thou dost always keep,—
And in Thine arms Thou hushest us,—
My soul and me,— to sleep.

Youth and Nature.

A dream of Dante's paradise, —
An hundred hills and bending skies, —
— The restless waters' rush and fall,
And Nature's myriad voices' call:
— Her mad and merry madrigal: —
When half-way up Life's golden stair
We pause and learn our sweetest lesson there, —
When Earth's roses share the diamond dew
With the same sweet flow'rs that in the primal garden grew,
Before that, for our sake, God made all things a-new.

Answered Prayer.

Like sinking of the midnight dews
On flowers He doth love,
So, silent, fall the dews of grace
From founts of peace above:—
And, if there starlight beams or no,
Which e'er God deemeth best,
Within His whisper, low, is love,
—Within his arms is rest!

. . . . . .

Youth.

A SONNET.

We stood upon life's hillside, fresh and fair,
When morning broke anew in eastern skies:—
—As on earth's natal morn in Paradise,
God's sacred presence breathed upon us there;—
And this was youth;—life's invocative prayer.
And so in dreams we fain forgot to pray,—
And sang, in dreams, our sweetest songs all day,
—Our trust, unconscious, in our Father's care:—
And so slept on, nor knew the summits gained,
And passed, nor, therefrom viewed th' enchanted land;—
And this was yesterday;—At some new dawn shall waken, unconstrained,
Our aspirant souls, and, waking, understand
Life's sweet narcotic from our Father's hand!

Spring's Awakening.

I.

The blushing spring, in all her fragrant verdure,
Looks forth from 'mid the drifts of glittering snow,
Smiles tenderly on all awakening Nature,
And, bending low,

II.

Bids the earth rejoice, awakens sleeping rills,
Bids blossoms wake to life, and birds to sweetest lays, —
Beauty, at the magic breath, the world now fills,
And, as in praise,

III.

Life, sunshine, — like Love's spirit in each blossom,
Burst forth in splendor: tints from icy Winter's hush, —
As from a long, deep sleep on Nature's bosom, —
'Neath Heaven's blush!

IV.

A mystic, golden haze rests on the earth, —
We hear some message from the coming Summer,
In the cerulean light that, at her birth,
Doth greet with heart of love the fair new-comer!

So as a Woman.

How can you, after all, find heart to offer me
The cold and distant meaning of a word the world calls "friend"?
How can you make your mind up now to proffer me
Such things when that your love has found its end?
How dare you to approach and bid me kneel
And offer homage to the smouldering ashes of Love's scarlet flame,—
How can a man like you send straight your glittering steel
To tear the heart that bears inscribed your name?
And I, a woman, whose now emptied hands,
Filled with the choicest flowers, rare and sweet,
And lade with all the tokens Love demands,
Have brought and laid so gladly at your feet!
And there they lie! Look at the wealth of my devotion
In reckless bounty squandered 'neath your eyes!
Look! Where this side of Love's eternal ocean,
Your hands have shut the gates of Paradise!
Perhaps were in my keeping gifts I had not proffered,—
If in my heart were thoughts you did not now possess,—
If there were anything I had not offered,
Or, had I loved you less,—
But, no! that could not be! e'en tho' your lips were marble and your heart the same,—
If not one clasp or sigh or kiss had made up Love's embrace,

Tho' on my heart in liquid fire you'd never writ your name,
Since once my eyes had rested on your face,
They must be blind to faults, as human eyes are blind
When dimmed with tender tears the sight o'er much,
Yet seeing as Love sees, in clearer light,
— As God, Himself, sees, pardoning such !
Oh, thou ! redeem but one sweet promise broken,—
— Take back but one harsh word thy lips have said, —
Speak to me once again as thou hast spoken,—
Lift up one flower from out the dead,
That lives, as in my veins the olden fires,
That, 'midst Love's ruins have not burned to embers, dim and gray,—
— Whose sweetness lives, — as live the old desires,—
That worship tho' the idol turn to clay !
Be once again the god that worship found thee !
Upon whose altar lies a woman's clinging trust, —
Who folds her arms in tender faith around thee
And loves unceasingly, because —— she must !

Sometime.

"We're tired — my heart and I."

I.

I know that one day, when we've learned the lessons God hath given,
When all the clouds that sometimes lower, by His own hand are riven,
Because He knew when we have grieved with lashes wet with tears,
O'er things our judgments, poor and weak, have spurned through all these years,
We shall one day understand why we were so denied
What seemed to us we needed most, and shall be satisfied.

II.

One day the fetters seeming to our souls like prison bands,
And paths that to our wayward feet were not as golden sands,
Because so near the mercy seat we then shall rest, and know
The fetters were of His dear love — the pathways fair as snow.
Then shall we see how weak our hearts in sacrificial test,
When strongest seemed our faith — and, too, that all God's ways were best.

III.

From o'er the waters of the past the pure dove, Memory, fain
Would bring our longing souls the peace of life's expected gain,

But not to-day; the mystery's Divinity 's alone,
And its interpretation lies unclosed before the Throne.
In shadowed density the sounds of human moanings fall,—
One day will revelation teach how God heeded every call.

IV.

No wonder more why fountains sweet to Marah's waters turned,
When all life's duties we have done, and all life's lessons learned,
Why all the lilies, pure and sweet, could not for us unfold,
And the twilights of each closing day be sunset-gleams of gold,—
Because when 'yond the silent Sea, with sandals loosed we 'll rest
Within the Gates of Pearl, and know His ways, not ours, were best.

Somebody's Coming To-day.

Bird, sweet bird, in the apple-tree spray,
  Bending down with its blushing snow,
Lift up your sweetest songs to-day
  For the secret that I know!
A secret that's tender, — a secret that's true,
Do you wish, happy bird, that I'd tell it to you?
You, sure, would not listen and then fly away,
Piping: "Somebody's coming to-day — to-day —
Somebody's coming to-day?"

Fair, sapphire skies that are soft smiling down,
  Smiling down in the golden sun,
Fall fair on his head, like a gleaming crown,
  Crown my beloved one!
For I have a secret, fair sky, blue sky,
And no one to-day is more gladsome than I!
Flash it not, sunbeams, with waters at play,
That somebody's coming to-day, to-day,
Somebody's coming to-day!

Purest of lily buds, cool, on the breast
  Of the lake's fair sheen and shade,
I wish adown deep in your chalice at rest,
  Were my secret, for I am afraid
That the tree and the sky and the bird in his song,
And the sunbeam that glides on your bosom along,
Will tell all that I think and all that I say
  Is: "Somebody's coming to-day —
  Ah, me! Someboby's coming to-day!"

A la Mode.

Upon her breast a damask rose-bud rested,
And shut its petals from the light of day;
Within her heart a dream of love had nested,
And from the world its sweetness hid away:
The morrow came with all its wealth of glory,—
—The morrow bright with sunlight and with song,—
To rose and heart, both, came the olden story
To heart and rose that ever must belong;—
The sun smiled fairly on the opening flower,
And fain with sweet beguiling on its bosom lay,—
That fuller breathed its fragrance every hour
Till shadows marked at last the close of day;

A whisper, and the maiden's heart was learning
The meaning of the words her dreaming wrought,
And heart and whisper,— both with passion burning;—
Their own sweet answer made to calmer thought;
And evening came,—Around the leaves lay scattered,
That breathed their fragrance freely in the morn,
To light and lover, both, it little mattered,
For lo! they laughed the maid and rose to scorn!
For, on her bosom where the flower rested,
A stain, alone, remaineth night and day,—
And from the heart, where Love's sweet dream had nested,
Life's bitterness will never pass away.

Faith.

. . . . . .

As sunlight fades, and, soothed in rest by twilight fingers cool,
day's eyelids close,
As weary-winged bird, with pinions drooping, in the homeward
flight finds rest,
So on the human heart Faith rests her touch; the sweet assuring
thought *God knows*,
The soul, all weakness in itself, fleeing to Him, finds refuge on
His breast.

A Summer Song.

"O might we of such rare days
Build up the spirit's dwelling place!"

"O unestrangéd birds and bees!
O face of Nature always true!"

I.

The Summer sweet ne'er lingers long,—
And each note of the wild bird's song,—
The hushed, low breath of winds that pass
O'er daisy drift and meadow grass,
Beneath the blue of bending skies
Throughout the golden hour that flies,—
Are but sweet dreams that flee away,—
Sweet dreams that will not stay!
The liquid, languid lake that lies
Beneath the sunset's crimson dyes,—
Reflecting all the matchless glow
Of days that dawn, and eves that go,—
The little joys that flash between,—
Within its clear and crystal sheen,
Smile on the hours that will not stay,—
That float in dreams away:—
Sweet dreams away!

II.

So, vain our fervid, feverish grasp
To hold our own the things we clasp,
And think them ours for one brief while:
The word, the glance, the sigh, the smile,—

To gain and keep some of the bliss
Belonging to the life that is; —
Clasping the hand of Yesterday,
Forgetting what we fain would say,
But reading in her eyes half-glad
And sweet,— half sweet and sad,—
Some glory of the ways we 've trod,
Some knowledge of the ways of God!
And life is but a Summer-day,
That dawns and is, but will not stay: —
Its morning and its evening meet, —
And eve and morning, both, are sweet; —
While song-bird sings and light wind passes
'Cross daisy drift and meadow grasses,
— O'er daisy drift and drifted clover, —
O'er the graves they sweetly cover,
— O'er the graves the wide world over; —
What matters it, time will not stay,
If love lasts through its little day?

"By the Waters of Babylon."

Whenever the world, grown weary with care,
Shall say, with a sigh or a sneer in its breath,
That bliss is a dream and love but a snare,
That there's nothing, whatever, that's true but death;
Whenever it whispers, Beware of the dream,
And turn from its sweets as you would from its bane,
That hearts are untrue, whatever they seem,
And in all that is precious there's brooding a pain,
Whenever you dream, with the warmth on your mouth,
Of the kisses red passion had set with a vow,
When the winds that were blowing came up from the south,
And the love that was then is a memory now,—
What then? If a woman you be, will you swear
That your hand shall be lifted in vengeance of man?
For the vows that were taken — as empty as air —
Will you answer with steel and with blood, if you can?
Will you hate the old world for the treason that's tested,
And faith proven unfaith, trusted again?
Will you smile when each note that you hold is protested,
And scorn to be sad for the falseness of men?
Being woman — what then? Ask the winds of the south,
And the scent of the lilacs, grown pale in the night,
And the mem'ry of kisses still warm on the mouth,
And the sighs of a lang'rous delight,
And the touch of a hand on the bosom that throbbed,
And a voice vainly hushing the pulses' hot burning;
Forgetful of wrong is the heart that was robbed,
And back to the past is regretfully turning!

In the longing for that in the days that are dead,
And the kisses of passion that strengthened thro' all,
For the breast where once tenderness pillowed its head,
For the rest of the bier and the pall!

. . . . . .

What availeth the sneers of the world that was old,
When the heart and the lips were yet warm in delight?
What avail for the truths that experience told?
(Oh, the winds that blew sweet in a night!)
Sighs on the lips, and tears on the lashes,
Songs in the heart that have ceased to be sung,
Fires of the soul that are burned down to ashes,
And the life and the spirit to love that have clung,
Be the true and the trustless together forgot
By the world, with its sneers and its curses to-day,
But the heart that has given, whatever its lot,
And have suffered whatever it may,
(While the mountains, immovable, lift up their crest
To the glory of promise that comes with the dawning,
And the tide, like a heart with its moan of unrest,
Drifts out with the soul at the birth of the morning,)
Still has offered some sweet to the world as its gift,
And proven its faith in its God as the Giver,
Tho' the song hath its sob, and the music its rift,
And the shadows fall dusk on the gold of life's river.

Evening.

The sweet marvel of the morn hath ceased its glad surprise;
The last faint gleam of sunset fades from western skies,
And Evening lays her cool, soft touch on Nature's tired eyes.

Hereafter.

"Shall we not weary in the windless days hereafter?"
"Still to the land we love our longings cling,
"The dear, vain world of turmoil and unrest."

I.

Sometime, asks one, in heavenly ways
When we shall walk immortal,
When, all-bewildered in the maze,
We pass the shining portal
And go thro' stately streets and see —
When that our sight is fitter —
The waving of the palms, ah me!
The gold and jasper glitter.

II.

When all the ways we walk among
Seem strange and wondrous, wholly,
When that our ears hear only sung
The "Holy, Holy, Holy!"
Shall we not strain our eyes to see —
With homesick tears to blind us —
Will not our hearts a-wearied be
For the old life left behind us?

III.

Sometime, when we, at God's white throne,
As His angels veil our faces,
Will there be on our lips no moan
For earth's familiar places?

Shall we not hunger for the sight
Of faces we shall miss there?
And long for earth, to say "Good-night,"
And the human lips to kiss there?

IV.

We wonder —but what speech can tell? —
Will homesick hearts be clinging,
When over fields of asphodel
Breaks forth the choral singing,
To the olden songs we used to list,
The songs that, thro' the rifting
Of earthsome cares, up there we 've missed,
To homesick souls come drifting?

V.

How will it be in other lands?
With parted lips in sighing,
We ask, while in our clasping hands
The flowers we plucked are dying —
How will it be? With bleeding feet,
And eyelids hot with weeping,
We wonder, 'midst the noontide heat,
If Heaven means rest and sleeping.

VI.

O, Earth! With thy delirious strife,
Thy feverish thirst — thy sorrow,
Thy fitful dream that men call life,
That ends with some to-morrow;
What will it be? We say good-night,

And kiss the lips that brought us bliss,
And turn us faceward to the light
That falls from other lands than this,

VII.

And lay us down with sleep-lade eyes,
With, in our ears, the singing
Of thine half-broken lullabies
That sunset tints are bringing,
Within our clinging hands the flowers
We plucked, and kissed, and cherished,
And held through all the weary hours,
When strength and courage perished,

VIII.

And fall asleep as children do,
Whose cheeks bear tears undrying;
Within whose heart old griefs are new,
Whose quivering mouth is sighing—
Yes, fall asleep, and, so forget
The things our hearts were breaking,
And, where the sun doth never set,
Somewhere will come the waking.

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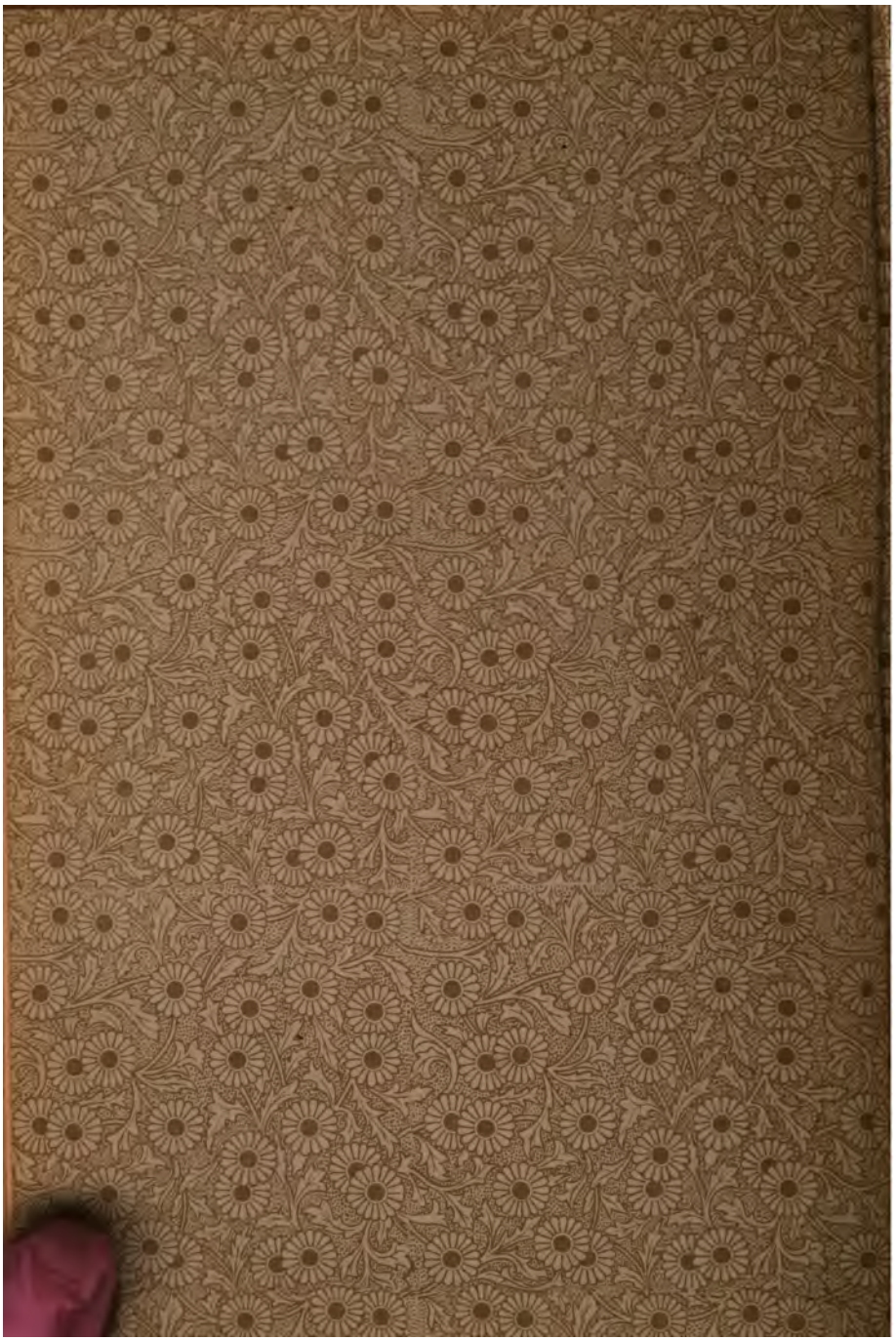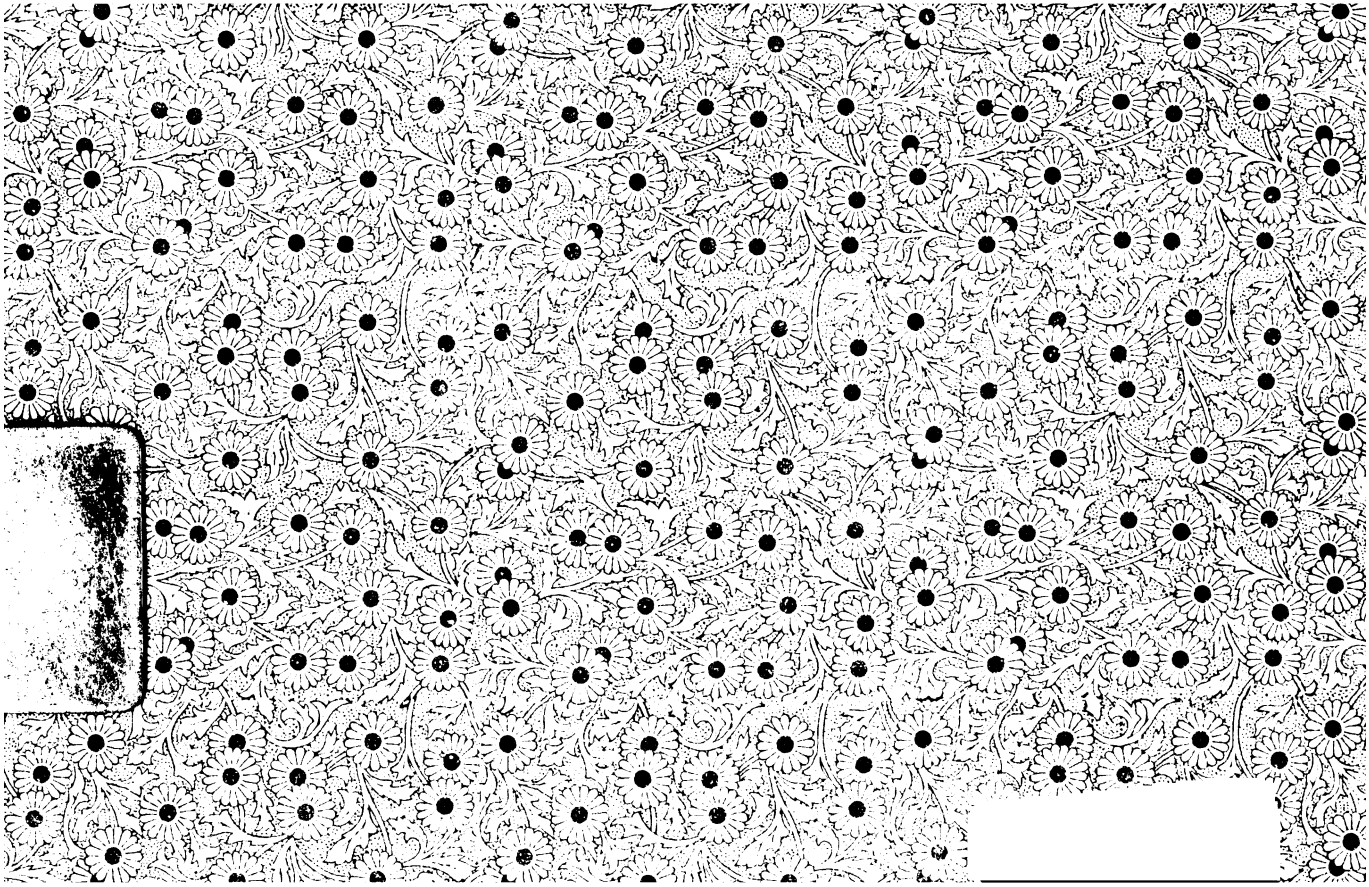
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